SILVER SAND

S·R·CROCKETT

SILVER SAND

A ROMANCE
OF
OLD GALLOWAY

By

S. R. CROCKETT

AUTHOR OF
"THE RAIDERS," "THE LILAC SUNBONNET," ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

conversations. The rule I have laid down of avoiding references to the classics, however apposite, though a grief to myself, is relentlessly carried out in the interests of the unlettered reader.

Indeed, I have allowed the writer to obtrude himself, save in the matter of reflections by the way, just as little as his intimate and particular connection with the history would permit. Nor would I have ventured so far as I have done, save for the commands and encouragements of my friend and patron, the noble Sir Andrew Agnew, of Lochnaw, Hereditary Sheriff of Galloway. He it is who has ordered me to suppress no part of this diary, especially those in which he himself is made to appear in a merry light.

Otherwise, I have done my part with care, verifying the irregular spellings, and doing what was possible to chasten the style, though in the matter of good honest humour I trust I have showed myself no spoil-sport.

From Saulseat, this eleventh of April, in the
Good Year of our Deliverance, 1688.

CONTENTS

		PAGE
	FOREWORD	5
I.	A DARK MISTY MORNING	9
II.	THE HEREDITARY SHERIFF	14
III.	JEAN HAY	21
IV.	A GALLOWAY JUSTICE AIRE	29
V.	THE KILLER AND JASPER	35
VI.	OUTLAW COUNTRY	44
VII.	A SWORD AND DAGGER FIGHT	51
VIII.	THE ASKING OF SILVER SAND	58
IX.	TWO ON THE MOUNTAINS	68
X.	HAND-FASTED—HEART-FREE	75
XI.	THE WILD MAN OF THE HEATHER	84
XII.	HAL OF WINDY STANDARD	88
XIII.	MISTRESS LILIAS FLOUT-THE-WIND	94
XIV.	SILVER SAND'S DILEMMA	105
XV.	THE GLED'S NEST	117
XVI.	NEVIN'S ISLE	129
XVII.	THE POINT OF NEVIN'S ISLE	136
XVIII.	THE COOLING OF THE FIERY FURNACE	146
XIX.	JULIUS AND JULIANA	151
XX.	"MASTER ALL-TOO-PRETTY!"	159
XXI.	THE SULKS OF SILVER SAND	166

		PAGE
XXII.	The Second Asking of Juliana	173
XXIII.	The Guest of Dominie Crogo	183
XXIV.	Silver Sand Makes a Resolve.	191
XXV.	Apples of Sodom	196
XXVI.	Like a Fountain Sealed	201
XXVII.	"Clear in the Closing Strain"	206
XXVIII.	The Taking of Silver Sand	216
XXIX.	Juliana in Pursuit	225
XXX.	Clatteringshaws.	229
XXXI.	Juliana Ascends Mount Pleasant	239
XXXII.	The Queen of Egypt the Little	245
XXXIII.	Ave Atque Vale	252
XXXIV.	Grey Roger, Outlaw	263
XXXV.	The Cocksure Ass—and Some Others	276
XXXVI.	His Earthly Father	287
XXXVII.	The Raid of Lilias Agnew	293
XXXVIII.	The Chaperon	298
XXXIX.	The Last Perversities of Lilias	308
XL.	The Three Bad Men	316
XLI.	In Gash Gabbie	323
XLII.	Birds of Passage	338

I

A DARK MISTY MORNING

ON a dark misty morning in the heart of May, the sun evident in the heavens, but slow in breaking through, Stanley the English gipsy lay out open-mouthed on the heather. His tribe had passed on, knowing better than to waken their lord after a night of emptying the mutchkin.

The Stanleys had left a fire alight in the bottom of the dingle. A blackened pot hung on a tripod and the fragrance of the stew was wafted to the edges of the little cleft in the upland moors where their camp had been pitched the night before.

But the fire sank low and the sun was high before Jasper Stanley rose on one elbow, stretched himself and yawned.

"Where be I now? This be noan Ormskirk Dell that I wot of!" His bloodshot eye roved about him with gathering anger in it.

"Left me again they have! Owd Scratch stap their vitals," he growled, sitting up on the rough couch of heather which had kept him free from the dew drizzle on the earth. "There be Tomat Darby, an' Gaffer Rowley, an' Roy Rice, all as calls theirselves of my band—and they have left me like this. Sylvester too, a pretty lad among the maids, he shall skip for this. Supple Sylvester, ye shall desarve your name or I be through hands with you!"

His rheumy eye rested on the three-legged pot and on the grey embers beneath it. Then he glanced at the sun and as he cast his head up was conscious of an ache in-

side. Then he took an observation of the pot on the embers.

"That were Julia Stanley for a garron!" he said. "Julia Stanley—allus the best and prettiest, if she be my daughter—which is her mother's affair after all. Out of two and twenty the only one to think of her father. Hello, young fellow, you there on the dingle-break, what might you be after oop there? No good, I'll warrant! How is it that I do not know you? You should be a good Romany by your complexion, a Sylvester by the slimness of your waist. Speak up and give an account of yourself, d'ye hear?"

The young man did not answer. He was cunningly laying flint to steel and blowing lightly on the tinder hidden in a handful of dry moss. He soon had the fire blazing, and sat looking at it with his back to the man with the inflamed red eyes like one struck with deep matter for meditation.

"Hey, lad, thou hast surely never heard Jasper Stanley speak to his folk, or thou would be quicker to obey! Look you, I am the King of the Gipsies ever since I settled with Killer Smith in twenty rounds. All in Moston Clough it were—which is Owd'am way. Turn and speak or I will serve thee likewise."

By this time Jasper Stanley, King of the Gipsies, had staggered to his feet. His arms hung knotted and hairy to his knees. His jaw protruded in a way that was not pretty to see, and he thrust up his shirt-sleeves to the armpits so that he might hit the cleaner.

Still the young man by the fire did not take any notice of him. He came on muttering imprecations in Romany and Low Dutch whenever he tripped in his English.

"Get up, you hedge cripple, sacré dammit!" he shouted, and swung a blow which had it reached the young man would have laid him on the heath. But the shadow of the approaching enemy warned him of his danger. He sprang over the fire from the position

known as "hunkering," so swiftly that he seemed to pass (and perhaps he did) between the legs of the tripod on which the pot was swinging.

"Thy cat's tricks will not serve thee with Jasper Stanley," cried the man with red eyes. "Sylvester thou art, and I shall serve thee as I served Killer Smith as was left for dead in Moston Clough, and well-nigh sat upon by coroner's jury in the 'Little Horse,' in Oldham town. Strip and stand out like a man!"

"I am very well as I am!" said the young man, giving a faggot a kick into place. "Come to your breakfast, silly man, and leave fighting alone till your stomach is fuller."

"I will fight where and when it pleases me," shouted Jasper Stanley, "you stand up and take your medicine. Your monkey tricks shall not help you before me—me that no man ever looked into the eyes of without quailing!"

The young man laughed aloud. It was such a very dry scornful laugh that it had the gift of enraging the red-eyed man beyond endurance. He made a rush, overturning the tripod, and in a moment was upon his foe. Or rather he would have been had not the youth (for he was no more) paused to assure the equilibrium of the pot with one foot before leaping easily aside.

Never did Jasper Stanley, whose life's delight had been the conquest of others by his fists, know what had happened. Somehow or other he received a succession of sharp and heavy blows on the eyes and jaw, as it seemed from a dozen antagonists, and then he found himself stretched out on his back among the heather, wondering how it came about that so many had attacked him at once.

Cautiously he rose to his elbow and gazed around. Only a slim young man stood before him with his arms folded, the only living thing amid all that ocean of moorland.

"Where be the others that set upon me?" Jasper Stanley demanded sulkily. "Come—let's see 'em. I'm noan one to bear malice. There be a dozen lads t' Moston Clough that could give both thee and them the devil of a doing!"

The young man still smiled, but presently, as if recollecting something, he unfolded his arms and exhibited his knuckles, which being out of practice, were somewhat bruised and swollen.

"These are the others," he said, "and they like not the job, not being to the manner born—like your blacksmith fists."

Jasper Stanley raised himself slowly, and regarded his huge hands with considerable interest.

"Why, you never do mean to tell me that them maid's puds o' thine struck out the King o' the Ormskirk Gipsies—aye, of all the Romanies o' Lancasheere."

"It was to teach you your place," said the lithe young man, resuming his whittling at the head of the staff he was making.

"To teach-me-my-plääce!" the big man repeated after him. "Say that again, young man, wilt tha'?"

The young man obliged, and without looking up he could feel the grit of Jasper Stanley's teeth and the whitening of his knuckles as he firmed his hands to strike.

"Come, none of that!" he ordered peremptorily, standing on his guard. The stick dropped at his feet. "If I strike again, Jasper Stanley, it will be to hurt."

The red-eyed man lost confidence, wavered in his intention and stammered out, "And who the deyvil be you, maister, to speak like a cock o' the roost?"

"Since you are, as you say, king of the gipsies of Lancashire, you are welcome to know that I am John Faa, eldest of the blood royal of Egypt."

Jasper Stanley sprang forward, clutching at his

shaggy locks and holding his head between two hands as he sank on one knee.

"I am thy man, John Faa, and do ye kindly put your hand upon my girt ugly pow. I answer for the Stanleys, the Burts, the Allens, and the Smiths—all good northerly names. Ye have only to blow the whistle I see about your neck and Jasper Stanley will fetch them trooping."

II

THE HEREDITARY SHERIFF

"HA, fighting. I cannot have the like on my lands!" A burly, bearded, broad-beamed man strode forth from a clump of scanty larches by which he had been concealed. He was blue-bonneted and blue-coated, with an abundance of silver buttons, on which was embossed a heraldic emblem. Grey rig-and-furrow stockings rose to his knees. Above were corduroy smalls, while on his feet he wore old-fashioned shoes stoutly soled, unbuckled, but with leather latchets —altogether a bien, couthy, well-appearing, obstinate looking man of the better classes.

But the slender young man was in no way put out.

"Sir," he said, as if addressing an equal, "pardon me if I finish my business with this man first. Afterwards I shall hold myself at your disposition."

He whispered a few words into the ear of Jasper Stanley, spoken in a strange tongue. The red-eyed man listened carefully, and nodded at each sentence.

"You understand, then," said the young man slowly, "see that there is no mistake—remember, the white birches by the loch of Cree!"

"I shall not forget," said Jasper saluting as he moved off at the long swinging trot which is called the Irishman's gallop, because the files of harvesters crossing Galloway for the English wheat-cutting can keep the gait up for hours without fatigue.

He was almost immediately out of sight, so cloistered was the glade in which the encounter had taken place.

"And now, sir," said the youth, turning with the utmost assurance to the man in the dark blue and silver, "I am at your service. Command me."

"I daresay you are," cried the man of the leather shoe latchets, "but you are also on my ground."

The young man shrugged his shoulders as if it were no use arguing stupidities.

"I fear, Sir Andrew, that you have not read your title-deeds," he said. "Your man of business (if you had one worth his salt), would have told you that when King James of the Baggy Breeches conveyed Ryan Moor to your ancestor he excepted Leswalt Dale and the Burnside of Knock-an-mays in favour of 'his loveit, John Faa, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt.'"

"I have heard of such like," quoth bluff Sir Andrew, "but suppose it were so, what has that to do with you?"

"Because I am John Faa, and my grand-dad's own 'oie.' You are of an ancient family and royally connected on the distaff side. But I am royal—so, as they say hereabouts, 'Mochrum before Monreith,' an earl before a baronet!"

"Hech, lad, but how will you justify that?" cried Sir Andrew.

"As for my title-deeds and parchments," retorted Faa, "the Lyon King-at-Arms must be your informant. I do not carry my titles of nobility in my tail pocket. As for the rest, there is a sword at your side and another at mine, and I am ready to justify any and all of my pretensions. Or it may be that you, being a man loving to do as the people do, would prefer the simple arbitrament of the bare hands——"

Sir Andrew burst into a fit of laughter which resounded all about the dell.

"Ah no, my lord," he said, "the clean metal maybe—I'll no say. I have some skill in fence learned from canny William Forbes, but the knuckles—mind, I saw you streek that English loon as quick as twice two is

four, so you and I will not play at that game, no, my lord!"

He spoke with a certain mockery in his voice which was very evident to the young man, and which aroused an anger at the bottom of his heart that he should be so mocked and lightlied.

"Sheriff," he said, "if I pay you the respect due to your rank, I do not claim from you, save in private, the respect due to mine, I am aware that there is a difference between a gipsy, even of the blood royal, and the tenth hereditary Sheriff of Galloway."

"I beg your pardon, Master John Faa," said the Sheriff, "but your figure like a willow by the burnside, and your comely youthful countenance, have played the deuce with my good manners. I would give much to have you for my doer—my helper, to aid me at home with my papers, and to ride at the head of my posse against evil doers."

The young man seemed to bethink himself a while.

"There is a word to be advanced both for and against," he said. "It is true I have had a suitable and sufficient education abroad, aided and perfected after my return in matters classical by diligent private study, and not forgotten while in Claverhouse's company. Now I would gladly be your man and help you in all things, only let it be understood that at all times you treat me as a gentleman and not as a dependent."

"Agreed!" cried hearty Sir Andrew. "I know well who will be the master. You shall be as one of mine own house, I promise you—like young Freuch or my nephew of Garthland—can I say more?"

"There needs no more, Sir Andrew, save that I must not be known by my own name of Faa, which has been somewhat too often put to the horn at the cross of Edinburgh by the King's orders, and may be again."

"Faith, as to that," said the Sheriff, "so have we all one time and another. But I am not a man to strain

either at gnat or camel; why not call you Silver Sand, which is a good name and one well earned in your business of carrying scythe-sand down from the straths of the mountain lochs where no other dares venture—no, not I myself, the Sheriff with thirty men in armour clinking behind me. So Silver Sand be it then. And we shall take our way home to Lochnaw, for my lady and Lilias will be sore put to it to think what has become of me."

"I fear I am but an earthen pot and unsafe to tie to in these troublous times, but mayhap you may be a brass pot, and I, in turn, may be glad to follow in your wake! The King is great for things hereditary, so long as these concern the Crown, but he mislikes the hereditary sheriffs because they will not always do his bidding. It is a sad thing to be afflicted with a conscience in these times. I know not where the Agnews got theirs—perhaps they brought it with them from France. Ah, if only I were like John Dalrymple, whom my lord his father calls the chameleon, so quickly does he change his colour."

"Sir Andrew," said Silver Sand, "I wager that you and I by laying our heads together can turn most corners of this crooked way by which we are sent athwart the world. A gipsy is not born with any conscience, and if I had suchlike it must have been gotten from my mother who was not of the blood of Egypt."

Sir Andrew looked puzzled, as if a remembrance he could not locate pricked him.

But the young man only smiled and whistled a well-known tune—the Ballad of John Faa.

"The gypsies cam' to Cassillis yett,
And oh, but they sang sweetly,
They sang sae sweet and sae complete,
That doon cam' our fair lady!"

"So you are the son!" said Sir Andrew, suddenly enlightened. "I knew there was more about you than plain gipsy. Laddie ye gar me forget my wife and

bairns—and what's mair extraordinary, my dinner o' fine black-faced mutton. Ye have either the honeyed speech of the enchanter or the forked tongue of the serpent that deceivit Eve—aye, even as the daddie o' ye coost the glamour ower the leddy o' the castle when her guid man was frae hame. And now, my lord of Little Egypt, take precedence according to our agreement, and we will be stepping towards Lochnaw."

Sir Andrew, the Hereditary Sheriff, called everywhere "the Sherra," was a man of middle life, pleasant and kindly, well seen among his equals and adored by his tenants and the commonalty.

"There is no man like Sir Andrew," was said of him everywhere, and indeed he had a way with him which indicated that he was aware in a jovial fashion of his deserts, and possessed a habit of command which was not lessened by the consciousness of two hundred and fifty years of hereditary jurisdiction. But he was a joyous man by nature, being what was called in Galloway "jocose," a quality which enabled him without loss of dignity to mingle mercy with judgment on his days of "justice aires."

And now as he and Silver Sand went along together, many a broad blue bonnet was doffed to the "Sherra," and the answering lusty hail "Good-day to you, Saunders man!" carried far over the fields from the edge of the moorland which they were skirting.

"Fetch in your nowt off the Fairgirth," he shouted to one man, "they will be ram-stammin' amang the braird o' the young crap. Hear ye me, Tam MacWhitterick, if I hae to send for them, there will be a fine to pay as lang as your airm!"

As they went towards the loch of Lochnaw which his son was one day to drain, the Sheriff rather belatedly questioned his new secretary upon his qualifications.

"Five years with the Saint Sulpicians at Issy!" he exclaimed, "then ye will be a Catholick, I'm feared!"

"No more than ye are a gipsy, Sir Andrew. I was in their company as you are in mine, but that makes you neither a Faa nor me a Jesuit!"

"Come round by the Liggate o' Leswalt, and ye shall see a man that is the very cask o' lear. Nathan Crogo is his name and dominie is his station. But he could give instruction to the diocese of Glasgow, and as for the Highland herd laddies that Burnet the Archbishop has whistled doon frae the hill taps to fill the manses of decent responsible men, they should be sent to him to learn their ruddiments."

And so it came about that I, the editor of this chronicle, had my first sight of John Faa, Lord and Earl of Little Egypt—though in this matter the Sheriff bound me strictly to secrecy, and bade me call him nothing but Silver Sand. This is a name he gets in the countryside, because, having the right of way among the wild outlaws of the innermost hills, he brings down the white scythe-sand from the lochs among the granite, such as Enoch, Valley, Neldrichen, Arron, and Glenhead, besides others nearer the main road like Grannoch and Skerrow—the produce of which last, though passable, has not the edge-giving qualities of the sand from the high lying lochs.

"Silver Sand here has learned his Latin from the Jesuits in France," said Sir Andrew, tauntingly, "so have a care, dominie, that he does not take the wind from your sails." But Nathan Crogo was not afeared of any Jesuits' scholar that lived, so I turned him upon several passages of my beloved Catullus. He managed very well—so much I will say, seeing that he was taken as it were, at unawares. And even professed to render a poem into the same metre in English, which was a ploy far beyond me at that time.

Altogether I was much pleased with the lad and did not at all mind when Sir Andrew, after keckling behind his hand like a great foolish calf at what he considered

my discomfiture—at last gave out a holiday to all the school and invited me over to Lochnaw to dine with himself and the Lady Jane.

"Come and see Jean Hay," he cried, meaning his wife, "she has better broth in her pot than any wife in the Stewartry or Shire, besides there is a sheep's head, and that is not to turn up one's nose at in these hard times!"

"Good-bye till dinner-time, Crogo, Nathan Crogo!" Sir Andrew called out, "why man, it stands you in a fortune to own such a name. 'Tis like the raven's croaking amoung the hill tops!"

I let him take what liberties he would with my name. For was he not my patron and a fine hearty man who always performed much more than he promised, and shut his eyes to all that it was better for him not to see? For instance, there had been for two years a list to be made out of those who did not attend the Episcopalian curate, poor ignorant body, which being session-clerk it was my duty to compile along with Sir Andrew. I noted down the names with care, and took the statutory oath that the owners of these names had not been seen at the public service during the twelve-month—which, when you think on it, was in no way wonderful, seeing that every one of them had been safe in the kirkyard for at least ten years.

But Sir Andrew never blenched nor winked an eyelid. He knew, no man better, that we were defeating the ends of justice, but all he said was that he would bear witness that the parishioners I mentioned occupied fine eligible holdings with permanent tenures, and were not likely to be disturbed—not even by the fines of the Council of Edinburgh.

Ah, a broad buirdly man was Sir Andrew, and a master of all about him. For though he seemed easy to take a liberty with, the lairds and great folk who were under his jurisdiction had not found it either safe or profitable to meddle with the Sheriff.

III

JEAN HAY

LOCHNAW, when Silver Sand first saw it, seemed to him (what indeed it is), a most romantic and noble mansion, with the waters of the loch lapping the walls and the towers standing up with a kind of dignified Sabbath morn serenity, the highest of them crowned by the fluttering banner of the Hereditary Judicature.

"Aye, it's graund, nae doot," said Sir Andrew, "but they are sending Graham of Claverhouse and his peddling whipster of a brother, David, to show the Agnews how to deal out justice in Gallowa'. Yon flag will soon hae to come doon, Silver Sand, and the thumbscrews and the boot will be set up in the place of my kindly justice."

"That time has not come yet," said Silver Sand, "and it will be a sore day when you and I do not find a way of getting round about the work of those deil's buckies o' Grahams."

"It's true, Silver Sand, lad. They are far frae their ain land, and they ken little about Gallowa'. But for all that, they hae laid 6,000 marks of fine on Lochnaw—because I have not proved forward in the service of the King!"

"Come to the hills, Sir Andrew," said Silver Sand, promptly, "I ken a cave where we will keep ye safe while the storm blaws its worst."

"What? And leave a' that?" said the Baronet, moving an index finger across the feudal front they were now approaching. "And prithee, what would be-

come of Jean Hay, my honest wife and winsome leddy? Sax thousand marks is a great sum, but there is mair than that in the strong box at Lochnaw. I should have my house turned into a barracks like my Lord of Kenmure, and my son James sent to the gallows, because they dared not touch myself for fear that the country should rise!"

They came to the door of Lochnaw, and at the sound of the laird's footsteps half-a-dozen dogs came leaping out about him. After some parley they accepted Silver Sand also as one who not only loved their kind, but came to the castle vouched for by the highest authority known to them.

"Jean! Jean Hay—where are you, Jean Hay?" the Sheriff called out as soon as he set foot within the threshold of Lochnaw.

A tall lady of a pleasant countenance, and wearing her hair banded about with golden hoops, came forward smiling.

"Be not so noisy, Sheriff! They will hear you all over the house!"

"What, goodwife, is the bairn asleep?" he queried merrily, for of course all his family was grown up long ago.

"No," she answered, "there is no bairn in this house save the master thereof, and Guid kens, he is charge enough for any one poor woman. But introduce me to your friend."

"He is by his degree an earl, but it will be as well that for the present we let that rest between oursel's, Jean and while he bides in this house we shall call him Silver Sand. For the Government is not exactly pleased with him, and if it were known that you and I were intercommuning with him, it might be a matter of our necks and not a paltry 6,000 marks."

The Lady Jean Hay looked at Silver Sand with a more friendly expression than he could have expected.

"It was aye the rule o' my faither's house," she said "that the greater the peril the more the need of a friend and the friend's open door. Neither shall be wanting in this house of my husband—King's man and Sheriff though he be."

"A poorlike King's man," said Sir Andrew, looking quaintly at Silver Sand. "The King has taken my bishopric from me and has given it to that wirricow, the brother of the Laird of Claverhouse! He will head and he will hang. His brother will ride and shoot, where my son James and I would merely have sent a dozen or so rough-tongued Whigs across to Ireland for a change of air. Our cousin Patrick over there at Ballikill by Loch Larne has need of a few to be ready to help with his harvest and to dig his potatoes."

Lady Jean smiled, a quiet smile, very peaceful and full of humour.

"And maybe, Sheriff, that is why he is so slow in sending over the rent ye were complaining about yestreen. Your grand Whig friends will be eating poor Patrick out of rick and byre!"

The Sheriff regarded her in an open amazement, with which he attempted to mingle some pretended dread.

"She's a fair marvel, Jean Hay," he said in an aside to Silver Sand, "to look at her standing on the step o' her ain hoose and smiling upon us, ye wad think that there was naething in her mind but to bid us welcome ben, and say that the denner wad be on the table in half-an-hour. But, ah lad, deep and dark is the mind o' Jean Hay, and I'll wager she has been running the peerages o' the kingdoms in her mind to think wha ye may be! This will I tell ye, Jean Hay. He is far ower weel learned to be o' this country, and can blatter ye off the Latin faster than any Papist clerk!"

Silver Sand had observed himself under the lady's scrutiny, but his instinct told him there was nothing

hostile in it, so he waited quietly and modestly till he was bidden to enter.

"We will send for your baggage to-morrow," she said, as if there was no question of an early departure. "Where will I tell Davie MacWhae to drive for it?"

"My belongings are mostly books with some small stock of clothing. They are in the care of Lucky Mowatt of the Port Ryan Inn at Stranraer. But I had better go with Davie. They have laid so long in her care that the good lady will need some recompense——"

"Recompense—fiddledee, heard ye ever the like of that, guid wife—recompense for giving a box or twa house-room?"

"I think the gentleman is very much in the right," said Lady Jean, with one of her warm approving smiles, "what is courtesy to a castle dame is courtesy to an alehouse wife."

"Then, faith, if that be the sough o't, Jean Hay, I shall e'en ride ower the muir wi' him. There are a feck o' backward tenants in Stranraer that will be nane the worse o' a cry at their doors!"

On the way, which proved sufficiently desolate and barren, with heather and the bent underfoot and a long look over the knowes of bracken down into the loch, the Sheriff laid all western Galloway before them like an open book. Who should know it if not he? He had been the high, the low and the common justice. From him the tenant had received his due when hard pressed by his feudal superior, and he it was who the next market day had brought the sulky laird to a better frame of mind over a bottle of Burgundy in John Sloan's or Lucky Mowatt's.

But the times were out of joint and the King's advisers were to blame. They had eaten out the Western counties with a horde of hungry Highland locusts who came only to plunder and to live at free quarters. They had not left an heirloom nor a picture at Lochnaw. The

very furniture was new, and yet the Sheriff had been a moderate man. Had he been a rebel his gear would have been taken better care of, as being Crown property, and handed back to him when he made his peace. As it was, a horde of young men, rough and roaring, Lag, Earlshall, Westerhall, had been given riding commissions over him at the instance of Claverhouse (who chiefly had the royal ear), and from them no man was safe, not even Hereditary Sheriffs of two hundred and fifty years' standing.

"I am untested," said the Sheriff, "if you know what that means. No? Well then, I will swear an obligation to serve His Majesty faithfully at any time and with any man, but the Lords of the Privy Council slipped into the tail of the last oath a bit clause that the King was to choose my religion for me. Most o' the lords and lairds hereabout betook themselves out o' the road, or had a call to try the air o' the Holland dykes. But I and my son James were held by the sheriffdom and we have stayed, though James is seldom to be seen in public, and we at the house of Lochnaw have to sit down with barred windows and locked doors to dinner and supper."

"I have something to tell ye, Sir Andrew," said Silver Sand, "that may change your disposition with regard to me. I also am at the horn for a deserter. On my return from France I was taken up at the Brigend of Dumfries as a likely young fellow to recruit Claverhouse's horse, and rode with them some while before I escaped, and now there is a reward out for me, and a description of my person. There's for ye, Sheriff!" He tossed him a paper.

"*Deserted!* A young-looking man with yellow chafts and no beard, very active and a good horseman, of the age of twenty or twenty-one years; would likely be serving in some stable or coaching inn south of the Border, speaks in an English or foreign-sounding tongue."

"Nothing could be better!" cried the Sheriff. "If they had set themselves to mark down another man and let you go free, they could not have done better."

"It is very likely drawn up by my late officer, Ensign Bailie, who is of good gipsy blood, and in some way a cousin of my own (for all Romany is cousin to the Faa, as you, Sir Andrew, are to the King").

A comparison at which Sir Andrew wriggled a little. It was a tender point, his connection on the distaff side with the Kings of Scotland.

But Silver Sand had something of youthful and engaging tact about him, so that his smile would disarm petulance much sharper and dislike much more pronounced than any of which honest Sir Andrew was capable.

As they rode in great harmony over the face of the moorland, all scabbled with grey granite stones from the size of a coffin to that of a cathedral, quoth the Sheriff: "Silver Sand, lad, if I were doing my duty as my excellent father would have done it, what think you I should be doing now?"

"I do not know," said Silver Sand, astonished that his host should start an abstract question.

"I should e'en be turning bridle about and riding with you to Lochnaw to clap you safe under hatches."

"And what if I would not come?"

The Sheriff rolled his huge muscles, and rocked his shoulders to the great amusement of his companion, who knew that his slim figure and trained members had in them far more power to strike than existed in any half-a-dozen porridge-fed Galloway rustics like the Sheriff's retainers.

"You would not refuse to come," said Sir Andrew, gravely.

"No, certainly," said Silver Sand, with a still deeper note of gravity in his voice, "I should not refuse to go anywhere with you because I am your guest."

"Ah, you have me there," cried Sir Andrew, throwing up his hands with a gesture of surrender, "and my father would have said the same. Lochnaw holds to the law of hospitality. Jamie, ye thief, come out o' that whin bush!"

The baronet had caught the wag of a bonnet-feather from a green covert of gorse by the side of the track, and almost instantly a well-girt young man appeared and in the coolest possible manner accosted his father, first with a deferential salute and afterwards with a hearty handshake, which told a tale of good relations and friendship as well as of sonship.

"Where hae ye left your garron that I find ye whistling like a lintie under a bush o' broom, James?"

"She is back at the Folds, well blanketed and rubbed down by James Loan. I had rather a long ride to-day, father, and——"

"I can guess where. It may be as well to say nothing of the matter to Jean Hay—I mean your mother. She has all the Park prejudices and never could bide the Montgomeries!"

The young man answered nothing, but a fresh blush rose to his cheek, which in one of his years and training was a very pleasant thing to see. Good wine needs no bush, and modesty is a flower which if it blooms at all must bloom early in the golden season.

"She will love her when she knows her!" he said.

"Of course she will," said the Sheriff, ironically, "as surely as our thread of life is but a thrum, mothers always love the beloveds of their sons. And Jean Hay will be no exception."

"Father," said young James cunningly, "put her in mind of her own young days. Did never you slip over to Park between the dark and the daylight, for a word from a window and the pressure of a hand?"

"If I did, young man, that is none of your business! Moreover, learn you this—that good proper women like

your admirable mother, as soon as they are wedded, condemn in others what they did with joy themselves. Strange that the passing of a ring before a minister and the muttering of certain prayers should make such a difference! But a woman like Jean Hay will not suffer in a bearded son what she took as a pleasant right for herself in the time of her teens and early twenties. So count not upon me to soften the angers of Madame your mother. Jean Hay was bred to think all good that went in at the doors of the Park. The Park ways are her ways and no others need apply. So wed, my lad, and ask pardon afterwards, that's my advice to you. As for the lady's father, I will undertake to manage him. He will be reasonable in spite of his place and fortune, in spite of your outlawry and forfeiture. There is no fear of men before my eyes, son James. But as for Jean Hay, my wedded wife—I most utterly decline to have anything to do with the calming of her wrath or with bringing her to give the hand of friendship to your young mistress. When ye are married to the lady of your heart as long as I have been to Jean Hay—well, ye will not stand there looking for explanations."

IV

A GALLOWAY JUSTICE AIRE

THESE were the years of Topsy Turvy in the State in the Kirk and in the family, through all the west and south of Scotland.

Sir Andrew Agnew was the representative of the King as his forbears had been for centuries, yet his house was a defenced castle against the King's officers who came riding with mandates which superseded his, and any one of whom might carry a warrant for his apprehension.

His son James was already "at the horn," that is to say, outlawed, and might be shot at any dykeback. But yet Sir Andrew was received at all houses, and might even at Kenmure or Castle Kennedy chance to encounter Claverhouse himself as two enemies meet on neutral ground.

Lag and Captain Windram, of course, kept no such great company, and were but rude, hectoring blades, seldom very sober and often very drunk. They were under Claverhouse's orders and shrank at the sound of his voice, but in all houses and the benrooms of farms they roistered and roared, thinking themselves very great men—as indeed they were, having the power of life and death according to the accident of their tipsy humours.

The Hereditary Sheriff had been superseded in his duties in so far as the religious offence of non-attedance at Episcopalian services was concerned, as well as the keeping of conventicles, having children baptized by Presbyterian ministers, attending field preachings and

other like grievous offences. All other crimes (being judged light by comparison) remained to the Sheriff and his outlawed son to judge, punish and remit, in the well tried patriarchal manner.

But it was little that crafty, slippery David Graham could effect at his courts, even with his formidable brother at his elbow. He could and did, fine women, "for harbouring their husbands within the space of the present year," and he could cause a child to be carried by a soldier to church and there be baptised by the hated "curate," or the mother to be punished for refusing to hold up the child to receive the sacrament from such uncovenanted hands. But in reality he could change nothing of the minds of men and women.

"No a bairn wants the water of blessing," said the Sheriff to Silver Sand as they sat out on the shores of the loch listening to the rustle of the bulrushes. "And why should it, the poor thing? Every burn that rins between the back shore o' Leswalt and the Brig o' Nith is a holy baptistry. The trees and the sky are temples, and out of his cave or moss-hag the faithful minister passes to his task. Lord, man, I have seen sixty bairns baptised in the lirks o' the Knock burn, while along the road not twa hundred yairds awa', the iron-shod feet of Claverhouse's troop-horses went chattering. And, man, it was bonny to see how the bit bairns neither cried nor whinged—aye, just as if they kenned. And wha will say that they didna ken, puir wee devils?

"There's Kenmure now—he's steward depute o' Kirkcudbright, there's Stair and my Lord Galloway. Ye wad think they wad bide wisely at hame and never set their noses ower the door cheek. And so they wad if they had been left alane. But I have seen them all at the field preachings—aye, even Kenmure and wise Lord Stair, President o' the Court o' Session. What do the like o' these men want hearkening to Sandy Peden? When he was minister of Old Luce, would they have

stirred from their chimney corners to hear him? Not they! No, nor were they more than occasional attenders at their parish kirks when served by their own ministers. Once a year on communion Sabbath was as often as ye wad see either o' them in the front o' the gallery.

"What then sets such men all *agee* after religion, even to following the dispossessed and interdicted ministers under the dripping leaves and down by the sough o' the burn getting their deaths o' cauld?"

The Sheriff laughed as at a gay reminiscence.

"And I have seen Stair with his feet fair water-logged, standing miserable as a cat on a rainy day and thinkin' dootless o' the comforts o' Carscreuch as he listened to Semple's 'Thirdly, my brethren'! Ha, ha! What brought him out there? What sent him to a lodging of one room in a Dutch garret—nothing but the order of the King that henceforth he had not the right to think for himself what he liked, or to worship as and where he pleased!"

* * * * *

The Court halden by Sir Andrew Agnew, Sheriff Principal, and his son James, his depute, was in the Town House of Wigtown, and Silver Sand rode there with all the Sheriff's train to see how outlawed men could still administer the King's justice.

Captain Windram and his men were quartered in the town, but the Captain saluted gravely, recognising that the Agnews were there on duty. The provost, an ancient Scots Vicar of Bray, fat and falsely jovial, a persecutor with the persecutors, and a Revolution man when King William came over, met Sir Andrew with the keys. His bailies and councillors were in the robes which had been bought for the King's coronation more than twenty years ago. But every man had the feathers in his bonnet set to the right angle (which made a great

scarcity among the Bladnoch blackcock). Their wives saw to the arrangement themselves before they let their men go out, while the few bachelors among them passed by the provost's door, where Mistress Coltran set them as featly in trim for the ceremony as if she had been legally responsible for every man of them.

"There will be nothing much out of the ordinar, Silver Sand," said the sheriff, with that ease which comes to those who have the habit of administering justice.

But to Silver Sand all was new and strange. He had seen the incomprehensible long-drawn-out process of French law where the original cause is drowned fathoms deep in procedure paper. He was bitterly familiar with the firing party at the barn-end, or out on the open moor, which the new rulers of Scotland had introduced, but he was not prepared for the fatherly way in which Sir Andrew treated his prisoners.

"Davvid Farrar in Drumrash!"

The town crier magnified voice and office, though he saw the man already in his place not more than a yard from where he stood.

"What's this, Davvid," said the Sheriff, as if the culprit were a small boy caught among the sugar plum trees of Lochnaw orchard—"stealin' a horse is a thing ony man may make a mistak' in when he mounts ower weel loaded at Lucky Mowatt's door, but a cow, Davvid—and what's mair, a cow and a calf off my ain lands!"

The culprit, a shaggy-headed man, a face lost in hair with a pair of startling blue eyes, small as pockmarks muttered something unintelligible.

"What does the Fingaul say, James?" the Sheriff inquired of his son.

"He says he is very sorry, that he had no idea that the beasts belonged to his chief when he stole them."

"Well, Davvid," said the Sheriff, "this is the first offence, man, and see ye that it be not followed by a second, as the calf followed the coo. For if so, it is a Guid's truth that ye shall be hangit on the Gallow's Hill at Clay Pottie by the common hangman."

"Sherra," said Davvid Farrar, "there is no damage done. I tried to sever the bit calf from the coo, but ilka yin set up siccan a rowtin, that Maister James, your son (being in hiding) cam' oot o' the heather and bade me drive them baith hame again—which I did."

Sir Andrew looked across at his son for confirmation of this strange turn to a capital charge. James nodded. He had indeed been in concealment and being a man who occupied himself with cattle, he knew that the rowting (or bellowing) of a cow after her calf had no right to come from Drumrash, the tenant of which possessed none. So he had "taken a step over" to inquire—with the result that he had not only recovered his father's property, but caused the thief to drive the cow and calf back to where he had found them.

"It's Maister James that has the head," said the culprit, ungrudgingly.

"I think you mentioned that Mr. James came forth from some cave near your dwelling," said Provost Coltran, suavely, for he thought that this would be an item worth knowing.

"Did I say so—I'm not mindin'," the cattle stealer remarked with unmoved countenance, "Maister James may have been at a county meeting or having a splore with the curate for aught I ken."

Whatever might be his fate, Davvid Farrar was not going to deliver the hiding place of his chieftain's son and heir to a rank traitor and malignant like the provost of Wigtown.

"Aweel," said the Sheriff, "as the cow and the calf were brought back, and this is your first offence, I will forgive ye, Davvit. But mind, my son's coming was no

less than an interposition of Providence, and if he had not heard the 'rowtin'' o' my coo, she wad hae been butchered before this and you, Davvit, getting fat on ribs o' veal! Sae my will and pleasure is, Davvit, that ye gang ower to Ireland to my cousin Patrick, and if ye steal the value of a groat yonder, Davvit lad, ye will find yourself danglin' frae the tree before ye can cry for mercy—nae courts o' justice yonder wi' your ain chief and laird on the bench, but just a tow rope, a dozen willing hands to reeve ye up, and the Lord hae mercy on your saul! Stand doon, Davvit."

In this manner the Court proceeded from case to case and Silver Sand wondered at the kindly wisdom which enlightened the decisions of Sir Andrew. He had not till now thought highly of his friend's capacity—comparing him with the subtle Jesuits among whom his youth had been passed. But now he saw that he possessed a more precious thing, the uncommon wisdom of judging with mercy. Rarely did he apply the law of the land. He never quoted precedents. He never consulted law books, but my Lord Stair had said of him that he would sooner put his case into the Sherra's hands than in those of the Fifteen.

V

THE KILLER AND JASPER

"CALL Jasper Stanley, Egyptian, and with him Juliana Stanley his daughter, and the men of his tribe—to wit, Tomat Darby, Gaffer Rowley, Roy Rice, and Supple Sylvester, atteint for the crime of *Murther!*"

Silver Sand started at the sound of the names. He recalled all the incidents of his first meeting with the gipsy Chief from Moston Clough. He tasted the chill sea salt on his lips which the wind brought up that misty morning in the midst of May, when all the hedgerows were budding. He had fought Jasper Stanley to put an end to malice between them, before claiming (what he knew would in no case be refused) allegiance to the name of John Faa.

This became suddenly his business. That huge fellow, the blacksmith with the red eyes, having put his head between his hands in due Romany form, had become his man. Therefore it fell upon him as their superior, to see that these folk got justice in the court of the "Gorgio."

Gipsies were not popular in Galloway, owing to the operations of the great raiding clans, the Mackittericks and the Valley Smiths, who had their headquarters in the wild country about Loch Enoch on the borders of Ayrshire and the Stewartry.

And Juliana Stanley? At the name something struck Silver Sand cold. For he knew very well the lash and the cart-tail nakedness which were served out to gipsy

women for even slight offences, or merely as appendices to their husbands' crimes.

But in a time when a lady of Arioland, a daughter of the house of Craichlaw, was sold into plantation slavery for a religious offence, what mercy could a tramping gipsy expect?

The men stood up with as much of the Romany callousness as they were wont to show in presence of the justice of the alien. Of course, every man instantly recognised Silver Sand as a kinsman, but not an eyebrow twitched. He was a "rye" among "ryes" and it did them good to see him so respected in a place from which they might go forth to the gallow's tree which grew on the Potty Knowe of Wigtown.

"Jasper Stanley, said to be of Moston Clough near Oldham in England, Juliana his daughter (and so forth through the list of names), indicted before this court for the slaughter of Thomas Ellerton and Ralph Kidney, gentlemen privates in His Majesty's first regiment of Dragoons, found dead with many wounds upon their bodies at the hostelry of the 'Rowan Tree' near by the Back Shore of Leswalt."

The Procurator Fiscal (or public prosecutor) of Wigtown then entered into the case which (he said) had caused great scandal and annoyance among the military chiefs, and might bring on the country another visitation of the Highland Host, who in such a case would have burnt and slain at random for miles around. The country might think itself well off that it was in the hands of a man so merciful as those of Colonel Graham of Claverhouse.

The grim smile on the faces of the listeners showed an appreciation of the fulness of their sense of John Graham's mercy.

"The inn or hostelry of the 'Rowan Tree,'" the Fiscal proceeded, "is a lonely stance, on the edge of the cliff between Port Patrick and the Heads of Kirkcum. But

it is well patronised and many relays of carters, carriers, and travellers halt there every day to bait their horses.

"At night, however, they are all off again, and the place is left to 'Rantin' Rob' the landlord, a few chance gipsies, to whom on account of a dead wife of their blood, he has a tender side, and the sea fowl that gawp and chuckle and channer on the rocks beneath.

"On the night of the murder charged in the indictment, the tribe which called Jasper Stanley its King or Chief camped there, some in their own tents or shelters and others in the ample barns belonging to 'Rantin' Rob' Rorrison, the landlord of the 'Rowan Tree.'

(The narrative still follows the Fiscal's charge.)

"The two soldiers on leave from Stranraer, where they were of Captain Windram's second company, arrived at the 'Rowan Tree' about seven in the evening. They had money in their pockets and appeared inclined to make a night of it. They had made acquaintance with Jasper Stanley's gang the day before on the fair-grounds of Logan, and had drunk with Jasper himself. There had been also on the part of Ellerton, some passages of hussar-like tenderness with the girl Juliana. It was likely, then, that the young woman had enticed them to this rendezvous, and so been the bait of the trap into which, like silly sheep, they had walked.

"So (continued the Procurator) having ordered a platter of scones, a whang of new cheese, and twelve Scots pints of the best ale, to be sent into the cartshed, the soldiers Ellerton and Kidney proceeded to entertain the wandering tribe to the best of their poor ability. No more was known of them till they were found tossing in the tides of the Sandeel Bay with many desperate incised wounds in their bodies, and about the throat of each a 'lingel' of leather such as gipsies wear in their foot gear, knotted and twisted. Their arms and accoutrements had disappeared.

"No suspicion attached to the Landlord Rorrison of

the inn, who, honest man, had gone quietly to his bed as soon as he had seen his guests settled down 'to make a night of it,' as they informed him.

"He had not spared his basket and his store. There was a plate of knowt's foot jelly garnished with syboes and roasted peas which had been left over from the dinner of an English lord on his way to Ireland. To which the kind man of the inn had added kebbucks of cheese like lappered milk, fresh and toothsome, with swats of brandy to help down the twelve Scots pints of the best ale. What landlord (inquired the Procurator) could have done more—who indeed except 'Rantin' Rob' of the 'Rowan Tree' would do as much?

"But all in vain was his bounty, since the wicked tribe of gipsies had first partaken of these poor men's hospitality and then feloniously and with bloody purpose aforethought, had murdered them, and cast their bodies over the cliff, to the loss of their lives, the danger of their never-dying souls and the damage of their uniforms and accoutrements which belonged to His Majesty."

Sir Andrew bade the chief gipsy stand up and answer to the indictment.

"Am I to be allowed to tell ma story?" demanded Jasper Stanley, raising his red eyes for the first time.

"Aye, surely, what else?" said Sir Andrew, "that is what we are here for!"

"Then," said Jasper Stanley, "I will speak the truth and swear it on the head of the young man who sits beside you——"

"What young man?" cried Sir Andrew, greatly astonished. "James, my son, do you mean?"

"Nay, the young man on t'other side, him wot favours the Sylvesters—he looks that slim. 'Tis on his head I would swear."

"Silver Sand," said the Sheriff, turning to him. "Do you know this man who is accused?"

"I know him, Sir Andrew, because I gave him a good

thrashing one fine morning in May, and my knuckles did not get the better of it for a week. But still I do not believe that either he or his folk had aught to do with the killing."

"Aye, aye," said the Sheriff. "I had forgot your place and rank. Well, Silver Sand, ye have the full license of the defence in this court to speak your mind."

"All in good time," said Silver Sand. "I have only a French pleader's diploma, but I daresay the Procurator Fiscal will waive ceremony and for the nonce admit me as a brother."

The Fiscal bowed graciously. He was of the borough, and though he was generally subservient to Coltran and the military party, he knew very well that Provosts and King's commissioners might come and go, but a Hereditary Sheriff was a thing of permanence. He would not, therefore, for anything in the world cross Sir Andrew or his son, even though under a temporary cloud.

As Fiscal MacMillan said to his wife that night, when he was pulling on his night-cap, "Lochnaw is none so bad himsel'. He speaks fair, and he acts fair, but I got a look frae young Locknaw, Jamie, the son that is so far ben with the Hill Folk. I declare it chilled the bluid in my veins. He's no canny, that young lad. What should the like o' him be bothering his head about psalm-singing and field-preaching. A lass at his knee and a pint o' wine at his oxter would fit him better."

"For shame, Fiscal," said his wife. "Would you have the good young man live in sin?"

"Sin be hanged," cried her husband, settling his red cap with both his hands well down behind his ears. "At his time o' life one is more natural than the other. Look at his faither—was there ever a wilder blade than Sir Andrew, when he bade the dance go round at Invernessan, and twirled frae Bess to Bet and frae Bet to Mirren wi' a kiss and a compliment for a'!"

"Ah, Fiscal," said his wife. "I have not forgotten

that ye were at Invernessan too in thae days, and I doubt not that the tyke was greedy eneuch of the master's leavings!"

"Nonsense, Maty, I was only thinkin'—he is a fine man, Sir Andrew, this day, very grave and wise. But I hae seen the day when he cam' doon Lochnaw braes wi' his whimsies as thick on him as blackberries—like Inverey doon Deeside whistling and singing, his thumbs in the arm holes o' his slashed doublet. Eh, but he was a blade in his day, Sir Andrew."

"Aye, and that day was your day, Fiscal MacMillan. Sae if ye are the wise man I think ye, ye will leave sharp swords in their furrow-sheathing, and gang decently to sleep."

* * * * *

The trial proceeded, and the gipsy made his statement. Neither he nor any of his company had anything to do with the slaying of the soldiers. It was true they had raised a riot at the fair of Logan Holms the day before. It was true that they had come to invite himself and his daughter to make it up. But his daughter had sent them a message that she had nothing to say to them or their like, neither in the way of telling their fortunes nor supping with them, and so had gone to her couch in the barn-loft of the "Rowan Tree," her father and four men of the company laying down straw beds across the door in case of any persecution such as that which had nearly ended in bloodshed the day before.

But there had been no alarm even. The dragoons caroused as long as he, Jasper Stanley, was awake, but they never ascended the stair, and neither he nor any of his company knew anything of the manner of their death.

* * * * *

"Now, landlord, tell your tale such as ye know it!" Sir Andrew commanded.

"Aye, Sir Andrew," quoth 'Rantin' Rob,' with a tug at his forelock, "I trust I see your Honour well, and the leddy and the dear children——"

"This one of the dear children will commit you for contempt if you do not tell your story without preface or reasons annexed," said James Agnew with a black look that quelled the landlord's complaisant humour, as swiftly as a bucket of water puts out a fire of peats.

("Gad zooks, kimmer," said the landlord afterwards to his intimates, "I wished I were safe in my bed. Yet the callant was young enough to be my ain son, but with a look on him that was all knife-edge!")

Accordingly he proceeded without further preface of politesse.

"I served the military gentlemen as their pleasure was, and to my bed I went. I slept but ill, for I was on tenterhooks lest some disturbance should arise between them and the gipsies for which I should be blamed. Also they made a great noise singing and shouting of choruses. Once they made a loud outcry for more liquor, and I did on my small clothes to go down to the cellar for the wherewithal to satisfy them. When I brought out the Hollands, which was what they called for, I found a smallish man with a red wig (as it seemed to me) seated beside them in great joviality and good fellowship."

"Ah," said Sir Andrew. "Do you see the man among any of the accused?"

"I do not, my lord—honourable Sheriff, I mean. He was altogether a smaller man, but remarkable broad across the shoulders, a man built like a double six of dominoes, with welts and warbles of muscle all over him. Oh, I saw the rascal very well. I should know him again were I to see him—and he was none of these. To that I swear like an honest vinter. If I am doubted may I turn lawyer and plead at the bar, instead of serving over it!"

"Did you go straight to bed, sirrah?" said James Agnew, looking up from his clerking at the table.

"I counted my silver, put the price of the gin in a safe place, undid my breeches' points and so to my honest bed! I saw no more—neither did I hear aught. The noise was over when I awoke. And when I looked out the door of the cartshed was open, the table was overset, and the tankards thrown about."

"Did you infer nothing from that?" said Sir Andrew.

"Nothing, except that my lads had made what havoc they could before leaving. But that they most always do, and I had already provided for it in the reckoning. Besides, there was nothing of value set before them. I have learned wisdom since the days of the Highland Host which came down upon us in the year of the '79."

So far the evidence had been all in favour of the accused, and Sir Andrew said so very clearly. Still he could not let a wandering band disappear from an inquiry just begun, and in which the military would certainly mix themselves so soon as Claverhouse returned from Dumfries. He must have surety and bail for their appearance.

Tne men in the dock looked at each other with the hopeless doggedness which characterises delicately organized and artistic races in the presence of the barbarian power.

"I will stand for them, Sir Andrew," said Silver Sand. "I will give you any sureties you desire, and I shall promise you on my own head and fortune that they shall be here to answer any charge, on any day, upon a week's notice being given to me."

"I accept," said Sir Andrew. "Make out the papers, James, and you Silver Sand, your friends being at liberty, perhaps you would like to talk to them as to the matter of the non-forfeiture of your bond on their behalf. You will be conscious that I stretch a point for your sake."

"I am deeply in your debt, Sir Andrew," said Silver Sand, as he rose from signing the document, presented to him by James Agnew, with a name, which seemed to strike that young man into an image of stone.

VI

OUTLAW COUNTRY

SILVER SAND and the little tribe of Stanleys were high up on the hills which looked down on the Loch of Cree. They were keeping well to the northward of the deep trough of Trool—holding Ben Yelleray (or the eagle's hill) in line with the Spear of Merrick.

They were on their way, as straight as the nature of the ground would allow, for the Faa's country. Far and very far away they could sometimes see the shining of a whitewashed cothouse on the breast of the moss, or maybe among the heather the faint blue reek of a still. Also though they saw no man about, keen eyes watched them out of every heather bush, and the word was quickly sent forward of strangers penetrating into the outlaw country.

Whereupon ensued a sudden but not angry uprising. For it was plain enough that those who came made straight for the fastness of Mackitterick, where Timothy, Chief of the clan, would be ready for them. Moreover (so ran the rumour ahead of them), they were all of good Romany blood, though with something of foreign about them which made a difference to the keen eyes of the Bailies, Mackittericks and the clan royal of the Faas, who were jealously watching their advance.

At each second hilltop the intruders lit a fire of dried moss and bracken, and having damped it down with wet branches, suddenly lifted these last and let three or more puffs of smoke escape which hung like clouds in the still air. One set of these had scarcely melted away before the quick-handed Stanleys were ready with another.

Silver Sand was signalling his master-words to his kin, and the number of smoke wreaths told tales to the watching outlaws of the hills. Presently there came an answer from between two black rocks which stood up on either side of a pass.

"The Dungeon of Buchan," said Silver Sand. "Tim McKitterick had gone to the limit of his tether. He is in much fear. I wonder what monstrous evil deed he has on his conscience to make him so careful of me."

They progressed slowly enough for Juliana was still ailing, not having got over her days of confinement in the Thieves' Hole of Wigtown. But Silver Sand kept close at her elbow and assisted her with a ready deference such as was never learned within the "six firths of Scotland."

Though they went on with speed from grey-mossed boulder to flat granite slab, yet when they lifted their eyes they seemed to be standing still in the midst of a wide and vacant world.

Beneath, the links of the Black Water shone like frosted silver in the haze of heat. Yellow, brown, purple, and black the far-reaching peat-hags stretched about them. An eagle hung motionless above in the pearl-grey sky, and the smoke over the Dungeon of Buchan slowly melted into faint cloud mists against the uprising slaty blue of the mountains.

Silver Sand piloted his company into the heart of the wilderness, till he came to the bottom of the great precipice which is called the Spear of the Merrick. Then he led them behind a fallen rock where was a den of clean-laid sand and heather, wholly cleared of boulders. The hanging brows of the rocks sheltered it.

"Take off your knapsacks and gear," he commanded. "You will find cooked food in the cavern yonder. The shelves are made to the right of the entrance. Jasper Stanley comes with me to see the Mackitterick!"

(The spelling is various in legal and other documents,

but the name of the famous outlaw was always pronounced "McKitterick," and indeed is so till this day.)

Juliana was put carefully down on a special couch of heather, laid three feet thick on the smooth blue water-pitted whinstone, a dry and permanent bedstead, though one which gives small promise of downy softness. But up on these altitudes, the air is so shrewd and quick that when one lies down, the eyelids pull together as if by strings, and the bed a man lies upon is not minded by him any more than that last one of kirkyard soil. Whether it be of sand or clay is no great matter to the dead—though in life I do admit that wholesome dry sand would ever be my fancy. Still though forty years parish clerk and dwelling close among the tombs, I never heard any complaints from any who were really interested —no, not though quite half of our Leswalt burying-ground is but little better than a swamp, where the jack-o-lanterns and corpse candles flicker and shine, so that, if so minded I could almost have sat on a gravestone and read my Horace by the light of them.

Jasper Stanley and Silver Sand pushed on, leaving Juliana and the rest of the tribe behind. Silver Sand crossed many spouts of shifting rubble, with his eyes on the unstable material and on the inexpert feet of Jasper Stanley, who had never been in such a "devil of a country," and who wished himself back again safe in the seclusion of Moston Clough.

But there was no letting up of the speed. The man from the plains might pant and sweat, but the hill gipsy pushed on remorselessly over the lichen-covered rocks and across the dark-blue ridges about which the thin mist hung. Silver Sand and Jasper forded mountain brooks roaring down out of the wilderness of granite above. Silver Sand sprang across as if his feet were winged with the wind, while Jasper Stanley splashed and cursed in his rear. So they went till at last they came to a great parting among the hills from which they looked down upon

Enoch, the loch of marvellous things, spread out with its islands, piers, and promontories, its bights of silver sand and glittering pebble reaches—all as if laid out by the hand of a cunning landscape gardener, and carefully tended every day.

Stanley, the Lancashire blacksmith, was no little amazed, and the freshness and vigour of the air caused him to stride out, filling his huge chest with great sobbing intakes of breath, as he would have filled his bellows. All was strange to him. The brilliant colours of the water and shore, and the prodigious upspringing of the black and terrible ramparts of the Dungeon, lightning-scarred and seamed with tornado gullies, struck the man with amazement.

But he stared and gaped when, without warning, Silver Sand led him to the Dungeon edge and, more than a thousand feet beneath him, he saw little lochs gleaming no bigger than so much water held in the palm of his hand, with streams that wimpled and meandered no thicker than a fine thread. This is the great *cirque* of the Dungeon of Buchan, the like of which is not in all Scotland, with the rocks falling away in purple precipices all about it, and only the one way out, which is shut by the bottomless green "well-eyes" and *sleechy* quicksands of the ill-omened moss of Cooran.

There was no more than time for Jasper Stanley to stand farther back with a terrified halt and a dizziness of the head, before Silver Sand led him into a narrow twist or "lirk" in the rock. The cliff mounted high overhead, and Jasper cast an eye backward up the defile in case of the need of retreat. They were among many scattered rocks and boulders, set against each other like planks in a woodyard, and anon like slabs piled up in a bairn's play of keeping house. But Jasper felt that behind each of these lurked armed men, who might be friends, and again, who might be foes.

Then all suddenly they were fronted by a house—or to

be more correct and exact, a kind of lean-to of masonry against the rock, which here had been hollowed away inside, partly by nature and partly by the hand of man.

The walls were thick and solid, of the undressed granite-stone of the country, but laid with mortar and carefully jointed. Jasper specially noted a door with a window on either hand protected by iron shutters of good blacksmith's work, and above three larger windows barred only and admitting light to a covered walk or corridor from which the chambers opened out into the dusk of the rock-dwelling.

Silver Sand did not pause a moment, but stepped lightly to the door, laid his hand on the wooden lachet, and, with a cunning twirl, threw it open. A whitewashed hall full of arms and ammunition laid out in canisters and powder horns, was immediately in front of him. But the place was empty with a wide resonant emptiness, and their feet sounded hollow as in some ocean cave. Silver Sand glanced into the rooms to right and left, but no one was within. He went straight to the staircase and mounted quickly enough, but by no means like one who hurries himself.

Evidently he knew how to find what he had come to seek and without pausing he opened the third door of the range which gave upon the corridor and stepped within. . Jasper followed him, and there in the quietest room in the world, a sheep dog asleep on the mat beside him, his belt undone, his pistols laid on the end of the table to be out of the way, a squat little man with cropped hair was throwing dice all by himself, his right hand against his left, a red wig on his knees and a bottle of brandy at his elbow.

"Smith the Killer!" cried the English gipsy, surprised out of himself.

"Hold your tongue in a gentleman's house when it is a matter of names. This is not Boggart Clough, Jasper Stanley," said the square-built little man. "You downed

me once there when I had had too much grog, but now I am on my own ground and among my own people."

"You forget," put in Silver Sand, gravely, "in whose presence you are *sitting*."

The man let the dice rattle on the table, and clapping his red wig on his head, he rose to his feet and made a low obeisance.

"Faith," he exclaimed. "I am in such a moider that I forgot my manners and the allegiance which every good gipsy owes to the blood royal. John Faa, I await your commands."

"Timothy," said Silver Sand. "I do not like your Smith-the-Killer work. So long as it is a matter of cattle driving and the taking of white mail from the pursy farmers of the lowland acres, I let you gang your ain gait—due honour being done to me. But the slaughter of two men at an inn where you were drinking—soldiers of Claverhouse too—surely you must have known that you were letting loose the dogs upon your own kith and kin."

"Sit down then," said Smith the Killer, whose real name (though proscribed) was Timothy, chief of the McKittericks.

He pushed water, in a finely cut carafe of Venice ware, towards them, and passed the brandy bottle to Silver Sand.

"Thank you, a glass of wine I shall be glad of—but after ye have cleared yourself."

Silver Sand's voice was full of the habit and quality of rule, and, without insisting further, the man in the red wig pushed the bottle over to Stanley, who instantly turned it up and swallowed an ample portion. He had come far and fast, and his legs were not so well used to the moss-hags as his arms to the hammer.

"I will tell you the tale, John Faa, and stand by your judgment. I kenned that my work would come to light, and that the ill-doing Grahams would make a great work

about such a thing, though it was but a trifle. But what matters it to you or me, John Faa, if it were blamed on a pack of praying Whigs, that are keen on the scent of martyrdom, at any rate."

"But," Silver Sand struck in, "here is a man, your blood brother, whom, with his daughter and all his folk, I saved out of the clutches of the law by making myself responsible for their future appearance. They are no Whigs, surely? And it was their lives that ye put in danger—their women and children who lay and rotted in the Thieve's Hole of Wigtown. Nevertheless, tell your tale.

VII

A SWORD AND DAGGER FIGHT

"SO," said the domino-shaped man in the red wig, taking an easier position, "since I am to tell you of the doings at the 'Rowan Tree,' and what befell my rascals there, it may be as well to begin at the beginning."

"It will be just as well," said Silver Sand, in a tone which was not devoid of a threatening quality.

"Oh, never fear, I have my witnesses. I shall call them in due time; and, in the meanwhile, you, John Faa, who know my evil deeds ever since I could draw the neck of another man's turkey, did ye ever find that the telling of lies was one of my faults? Answer me that."

Silver Sand smiled.

"Not to me," he answered readily.

"I shall not begin now," said McKitterick. "Death has passed too near me. What I have done, I have done —but not for myself. And not even Sir Andrew could condemn me, still less the head of our people."

"That is yet to be decided. You have put your kin in great danger. Let us hear your tale."

Silver Sand spoke with unusual austerity. His eyes in that dusky place plunged into the man before him, but though little flames like will-o'-the-wisps danced in them, the McKitterick did not flinch.

"Very well," said Silver Sand, "at present you are speaking the truth."

"So I shall continue," said McKitterick of the red wig. "It is true that I am the man known in England, and

by this Jasper Stanley, as 'Smith the Killer.' I could never remain long in one place, and for that reason the Dungeon of Buchan is not wide enough for me, though I will not deny that it makes a good place of refuge when pursuers are many and active down there among the yokels and town bodies, with their warrants and magistrates."

"What were you doing at the 'Rowan Tree'?" Silver Sand interrupted, for he was not to be turned aside from his inquiry. The face of the McKitterick darkened.

"A man is bound to answer his chief in all things which concern the clan, but there are private matters which a man may keep to himself and be loyal still."

"This is a case of men and women of your blood accused of murder, and it will be better that you trust your chief."

"That will I do, but you will let me speak with you for a moment apart. For what John Faa may know of his clansman, is not knowledge for all the world."

"Go to the door, Jasper Stanley, and bide till I call," said Silver Sand, and the blacksmith went out with a suddenly lowering brow, which showed his sullen and intractable disposition.

"Whatever concerns you or yours, you shall know, Jasper Stanley," said Silver Sand, remarking his despite. "Besides, if you asked the same favour—to speak in my private ear—the McKitterick here would at once go to the yard, though we are in his own house."

* * * * *

"Ye have heard of the Auld Leddy of Charteris Lodge?" the red-headed man began, tugging his wig well down over his brow. "She is sib to the Sherra—an Agnew, own sister to his father. She has siller, too, and that never comes wrong to a man like Sir Andrew. A man cannot be free-handed on an empty pocket, beside, it is no long time since he paid his fine of six thousand marks. So down comes Lilias, his bonny niece, with

her maid, Priscilla Temple, both on a visit to their Aunt Anne Agnew at the Lodge. Being half a Kennedy, she was named Susan Anne, but in the countryside she was never kenned by ither name than just Aunt Anne.

"Now, in your private ear, Chief. I am no great follower of farthingale or petticoat, but I do admit it (to you alone) that this Priscilla Temple had cast the glamour over me. Where did I meet her? Why, in the house of a good dissenting Roundhead in England. 'Twixt Essex and Suffolk it came about. But she was little like her surroundings, though she led everybody by the nose, from the swineherd in the meadow to the broad-hatted old hot gospeller himself. Isaac Selby was the name of him, and the weaving of hosiery was his trade, which he did on frames, finishing them with a seam up the back after the Flemish manner, and so could undersell everybody, who knitted round and round in the old way. Well, Mistress Priscilla was a woman of parts, learned in Gorgio ways, but as true a Romany as ever crossed a hand with silver. I came down to the Shore Side, near the 'Rowan Tree,' to see her, as it had been my habit ever since she entered into the Sheriff's service. For she tells me all that is being talked over in the house, and all the pains and penalties which may threaten us of Egypt.

"I came down, therefore, across the hills, keeping wide of the towns and villages, but provisioning myself readily from the poor folk, who had little but their oat-cakes and the braxy mutton hanging to their smoky rafters.

"And on the eve of a day when I had made nigh twenty miles over the heather, I crept into the cartshed of an inn to sleep. I got among the good dry sheaves, and pulled them all about me for a covering. So weary was I that I was asleep before I had time to be conscious of my hunger. 'Who sleeps, dines,' I have heard the French say, and the proverb is true.

"I woke up with the comfortable smell of cooked viands in my nostrils, and the shouting of drunken songs in my ears. I lay still and listened, for I dared not move, hearing the clanking of military accoutrements, and not knowing how many there were there at the drinking bout, or in the shelter into which I had gotten by misfortune.

"But presently I heard these two—Ellerton and Kidney, by their names—laying out their plans to take Charteris Lodge, to torture the old lady till she should discover to them her treasure, and then to have at their pleasure 'the two wenches,' as they called my Priscilla Temple and her mistress Lilias, niece of the Sheriff of Lochnaw.

"Now, I do not ask you to take me for a man soft at heart, or one who stands upon a nicety of *meum* and *tuum,* when the odds are equal, and there is a man in the case. But I have no *gout* for such work as these rascals proposed, and the very thought of them torturing women—perhaps, even Priscilla—turned the very stomach within me——"

Silver Sand nodded, and his brow began forthwith to clear.

"There I lay," said Smith the Killer, "and heard them laugh over the details of their plan; allotting this one and that to the other, and tossing the dice for the first choice in the matter of the maids.

"So, being well armed, and with an anger such as I never felt before burning in my heart, I slipped down the corn-mow, and so out of the back door, entering again at the front, and making a low bow to both of my martial men.

"Ellerton was for running me through the body on the spot, but Kidney, his companion, cried to him to hold his hand, for who knew but that I might be a useful ally. But, at any rate, they were two to one, and could dispose of me later if need were.

"So I sat beside them, but well on the opposite side

of the table, with a long rapier naked between my legs, and a dagger ready and loose in its sheath, where my right hand could grip it. A pair of pistols were on the table, but I managed to spill some wine over the pan and priming. The troopers were so drunk they never took the least notice, though all their talk was of blood and killing, and their speech so coarse I never heard the like, though I have been where men are not squeamish about expressing themselves."

"I have heard," said Silver Sand, "the men were not of my regiment, but I did not ride long behind Colonel John Graham without hearing such talk from foul English carles. It is permitted, and even encouraged. The officers called the process 'dragonnading'—which means quartering the rank and file upon suspected people in lonely houses, and riding off themselves to a tavern, leaving the men of the troop to the devilish freedom of their own wills."

The Killer took off his red wig, and sat caressing it on his knee, his shorn, stubborn, black poll changing his appearance completely.

"There you had the advantage of me," he said gravely to Silver Sand. "Still, I was ready for my gentlemen when they made their advances to me. There was, it seemed, a fortune for the lifting within half a mile of where we sat—only an old dotard of a man-servant, who slept in a cottage near the house. He, if he proved awkward, might be served first, and, for the rest, only women. Would I join? If I had not a horse, the landlord had two in his stable, I might borrow one, and, if it pleased me, carry off a rich young heiress across my saddle bow!

"I appeared to weigh the matter, but at last I agreed to take part with them, and we called for a stirrup cup from 'Rantin' Rob,' the landlord of the 'Rowan Tree.' The stub of one candle was guttering in its socket, and so he was able to describe me. But he did not stay long,

being anxious to get back behind his locked doors, and into his naked bed, for he trusted little to the red troopers when in liquor, having seen quite enough of them as they passed to and fro upon their bloody errands.

"Soon we were out on the road, and there, as I had agreed, I led, with my two ruffians stumbling after me. As you may imagine, I kept them well away from the straight road to Charteris Lodge, holding instead to the cliff edge, till I came to the darksome place where the Mays burn runs through a dell, with alder and birch fringing both sides, and a fine little piece of land, level as a bowling green, lying under the shadow.

"Now, ye butchers," said I, "fight for your lives. You are great men to talk of strangling old men, tormenting women, and carrying off maids—let us see what ye can do against a man. You are only two to one, which, I own, is poor odds in your profession, where it takes a dozen or twenty of you to shoot an unarmed Whig at his own door cheek."

"That we will soon show you," cried Kidney, snapping his pistol at me, but it went not off, for the spilt wine had done its work.

"Here, Thomas, at him with the other pair," he roared, but before he could get the first out of its belt-casing of soft leather, I had nicked my dagger through the back of his hand, which did not improve his temper.

"Then they drew their swords, and fell to cursing me —'blood-and-wounds traitor' being the friendliest of their words. In the angle of the burn I had noticed a sheep-ree built of flat slabs, and in the corner of this I placed myself, back to the wall—only in time, be it said, for Kidney was already bidding Ellerton to get behind me. They had their great swords, such as dragoons use in making a charge, each with a hundred pounds of steel in blade, basket, and sheath. I had only my little small-sword, and a dagger in my left hand, to outface them.

"But my eyes were better than theirs, and so I had

kept them away from the full moonshine which lay all around on the cliffs almost as clear as day, but only sparkled and dimpled in the blue dusk of the alder shade around the sheep-ree. So the fight was more equal than would appear. Indeed, the advantage was mostly on my side. A dozen times I could have passed my rapier through one and the other, only that I feared the slashing return stroke from the one I had not touched. But when Ellerton had sunk his sword deep in the earth, having missed his stroke at my head, I nicked him neatly with the left hand, and while I was about it sent my rapier home under Kidney's guard. The two fell across one another like two trees blown down in a wood. Then I made all *siccar* with the dagger, and had my gentlemen over the cliff so fast that Ellerton had not sunk to the bottom before Kidney was splashing after him.

"The devil receive his own," I cried after them by way of funeral service, and started back for the Dungeon of Buchan before the time of noon-setting. So, John Faa, here I am, and I pray you tell me what you would have done in my place?"

"Perhaps," said Silver Sand, "I should not have done so well. But, at any rate, you and I must have a bout at the foils one of these days. But no dagger—for, except against odds, I count it a traitorous implement."

VIII

THE ASKING OF SILVER SAND

NOW the Dungeon of Buchan is a wide place, and many men can be safely accommodated there, not to be found even if a regiment should come searching them—that is, not without someone to guide them.

So Silver Sand sent back one of McKitterick's men, along with Jasper, to bring up the rest of his party. Then he went out himself to walk by the side of the loch. He lay down in the shadow of a rock to rest and think. There were difficulties before him which would become more evident as time went on. How much of the Killer's tale could be told to the Sheriff? Some of it must be, for the sake of those women within Charteris Lodge; yet how was he to keep the secret of the Killer's identity. He could not deliver him up to Clavers, who would be raging like a desert lion because of the deaths of his troopers. After all, Sir Andrew was Sheriff, and in criminal matters still responsible; though the authority in affairs of the Kirk and the "tests" had been removed from him. He resolved to speak to James Agnew, who was not only in hiding for opposition to the Grahams, but had no official position to be considered like that of Hereditary Sheriff.

Silver Sand knew that his son's word had much weight with his father, and so he resolved, as soon as might be, to lay the whole case before him, keeping back only the identity of the Killer with the Chief of the outlaw McKittericks.

Presently he was roused from his deep meditation by the sound of footsteps and the trampling of hoofs.

A score of hardy little Galloway ponies were bringing up supplies to the house of the Dungeon of Buchan.

Several youngsters of the tribe straggled behind, getting what amusement they could out of the attempts of the English gipsies to control their small, spirited steeds among the accidental rock-scarps and boulder mounds of Loch Enoch side. Now and again one of the Stanleys would find himself thrown off, to their infinite delight. They danced about and yelled, stimulating the other *shelties,* so that they, in their turn should rid themselves of their cavaliers.

No harm was done and no bones broken, for the distance was nothing, and the heather soft. But the amount of swearing and chasing needed to establish order delighted the young McKittericks, who, fleet-footed as the hill deer, could easily run down and bring back the runaway ponies.

Often the young rascals would return lying full length on the *shelties'* backs, or with their faces to the tail, guiding with the heel, and riding as easily as if they were upon a horse carefully gentled and provided with saddle and bridle.

It was thus that they showed off their skill before the English, whom they looked upon as of an inferior blood to the Faas, Marshalls, Bailies, and McKittericks of these ultimate hills.

Then all except Juliana, the only daughter of the red-eyed smith, turned along the edge of the Dungeon wall, and so upwards to the rock house where Chief McKitterick, called in his journeyings Killer Smith, was serenely throwing dice for groat pieces, his right pocket against his left.

But it chanced, as such things chance, that Juliana slipped from her pony at the sight of the blue lake set in its granite frame, with the dainty white bleaches of

silver sand, the like of which are not to be found in Scotland, and little green meads where the burns run down, gay and fresh, among the heather.

She had not dreamed of finding anything so fair in this high wilderness of moor and mountain. So she went down to walk by the water-side, fearing (as all must who look upon Enoch from a distance) that such beauty must vanish into nothingness, as when one walks towards the end of a rainbow.

But it was not so. Juliana stood on the utmost verge of the strand of silver. She stooped and undid her hair. She dabbled it in the limpid water, through which the spotty, stumpy-tailed trouts steered their swift way, and she turned round laughing, only to encounter the eyes of Silver Sand laughing with her.

She tossed the damp ringlets out of her eyes, and banded them quickly with a far-descended gipsy hoop of silver, cunningly inlaid with gold in wonderful lines and wimples. It had come from Damascus, they said, and had made part of her mother's dowry, and that of many mothers of Romany daughters ever since they first came out of the mysterious east to be tossed and battered, and sown broadcast; and yet, somehow, to hold their own in those western lands, in which they chose not to be dwellers, but birds of passage.

Juliana was not startled to find Silver Sand there. He was one of her race, and the Rom may appear anywhere, and at any time, without needing to give an explanation like one of the stranger race.

"Greeting, my lord!" she said, hastening to take him by the hand. She kissed his upturned wrist where upon the olive skin the blood of Egypt lay purple black in the veins, a sign which cannot be mistaken.

"I prefer to be called 'Silver Sand,'" he said, with a quick smile. "I am only a brother Romany whom you come to visit in these wilds of Chief McKitterick. Be good enough not to forget."

"I shall never forget," she cried, with an exaggeration of feeling in her tone, which was, however, only apparent. "Am not I Juliana Stanley, and cannot I understand these things?"

It was Silver Sand's turn to kiss the girl's hand. He did it with a gentle pensive grace, eminently foreign, such as she had never experienced. Yet the gipsies honour their women, and are repaid by them with a rare fidelity. Juliana Stanley could hold her own with credit in a contest of smart speeches against a score of young bucks at Ormskirk Fair. But this slenderly built stranger with the soft manners and the commanding eyes that shone with a cool interior light—she had never seen anything like him. All men seemed awkward and rude beside him. He was somehow attuned with this wild stillness, to the blue loch, the green granite-fringed islands, and the far-spread glittering beaches. She felt herself woefully ignorant and tongue-tied before him. Yet he had kissed her hand, though, as she knew, he was a belted earl, and the only king of the tribes which own the sway of Little Egypt.

In the cloughs and dales between Yorkshire and Lancashire she had left many dusky swains lamenting. She had left them with a laugh which showed her white teeth, and a flirting of a small brown hand in the air, to show how little the separation affected her.

But now, looking on this young man, she knew that they were amply avenged—these aspirants at whom she had mockingly bitten her thumb, when the apple blossom was bright all along Moston Bottoms.

Juliana's heart suddenly beat faint and fast. She had always known that love (at which she mocked) would overtake her one day with a terrible suddenness. The steady circle of the granite-starred hills ran round her like a wheel, and, but for his sustaining arm about her shoulders she would have fallen—she, Juliana, who had tamed a strong stallion which her father had left behind

from the fair, because none of the tribe could master him; had taken him and sold him at Ormskirk for forty guineas of the right gold, while her father was still chaffering over his mares with the dealers from the Palatinate.

But her time had come, and Juliana knew it. She had been meant to love this young man, but now it was past praying for. If he would love her—so much the better. Yet if not, she would not complain, but, like a true gipsy, take her life as it came to her.

They sat down on the shore together, the Isle of the Headless Folk shining before them, the miniature loch upon it upheld, a mere fleck of blue, vivid as a peacock's feather, against the rugged face of the conical Mountain of the Star.

They talked together, Silver Sand with no thought of love, but desirous of showing respect to the daughter of the man he had saved. Besides, he was a man, and could not help noting the exquisite shape of the nape of the girl's neck, and, divining the perfections hidden beneath her gown, he shuddered as he thought of the hangman's lash applied to that warm brown skin. Well was it for Juliana Stanley that he had happened to stand well with Sir Andrew, for the best of men and the kindest of Sheriffs did not look favourably upon gipsies, sorceresses, fortune-tellers, and witch-wives.

Juliana did not know what was passing in the young man's mind, but the instinct of her blood told her that it was full of kindly thoughts for her, and the mere idea caused her to blush. Not, indeed, with the timid down-looking blush of the Gorgio, but with that proud, self-revealing reddening of the dusky cheek which does not trouble at all the women of a race among whom, through all the ages, the girls have first hoisted the love signals to the men of their choice.

"Sit down and talk," he said, making a place for her where he had been reclining on a couch of clean granite

sand, heaped into billowy dunes by the waves of the lake. Juliana obeyed, and the silver particles cried out crisply under her weight as she flung herself down.

She spoke to him of her father, and of the home he had made for her in the winter. No, she had never known her mother, but had always been like a princess among the Stanleys. They were the greatest and richest of all the English tribes, and were respected in their own country.

"We only wander in the summer and autumn," she said, "because—because it is in our blood. But in Moston Clough we have stone-and-lime houses of our own. My father has a forge of three fires, and both journeymen and apprentices, whom he sends with travelling apparatus to the villages about. Then for selling to the Gorgio he has a stable of horses. I have seen thirteen in it, and all honestly come by, with the good silver money paid down, and the receipts in the powder-drawer."

"I fear," said John Faa, with a curious look at the girl beside him, "I cannot say as much for my clan. The nearness of the mountains, where none can come without my leave, and the easily-opened lachets of the stable-doors down yonder on the farms, prove too much for the Faas. But now I am returned from France, if the rascals will listen to me, I must wean them from the horse-stealing, except, of course, from the barracks and exercise-grounds of the dragoons."

"I understand," nodded Juliana, brightly; "who steals from the King only takes back his own."

"Do you know French?" asked Silver Sand, who thought that he recognised in the girl's saying the translation of an Angevin proverb.

"Only a very little, a word here and there, gathered from the talk of a woman who sometimes journeyed with us as we came northward from the dales. She had the black magic, and could founder horses, dry the milk of

cows, raise storms, and even take the lives of men and women by thrusting pins into the breasts of images of wax made after their likeness."

"What was her name?" asked Silver Sand, who had known many of his race in France, where they wandered about Angoulême, and came about his school, watching for him on days when they knew him likely to be abroad.

"We only called her 'Tarantella,'" said Juliana, "and she would never tell us of what tribe she was. While she was with us she passed as a Stanley, but she ran away between Carlisle and Penrith with a man who tamed snakes and made knots of his own body—a brown man and an uncanny. Ah, the sight of him made me shudder."

"I fear she is no true Romany, this Tarantella of yours," said Silver Sand; "such do not leave friendly folk to go off with any half-caste tumbler or sleight-of-hand man that runs the road."

"She left a note for my father, saying the juggler was her brother," Juliana answered, "but I think no one believed it except myself, who saw no improbability. For why else should she leave us, who had been kind to her?"

"There are good and there are evil, little Juliana," said Silver Sand; "you have learned to trust none of the outland Gorgio people. And that has been your safety. But even among us there is the false blood of Egypt and the true. The difference is harder to know, but you must learn, and I would have you beware of this Tarantella of the Black Magic, who is a gipsy of no tribe and practices devil's tricks, such as are not permitted of any clean-blooded Romany.

The girl sighed as she learned over the broad blue mirror of the loch.

"I had no other woman to speak to among many men, and she was kind to me."

"All the same, beware, Juliana," he said; "witchcrafts

and Italian poisonings end but one way, and that is on the flaming pyre of wood steeped in tar." Then Silver Sand very quietly told the girl many wise and needful things. Scotland, he said, was very different from rich England. Her father had done wrong to come into a country of which he knew not the harsh customs. Especially had he done wrong to bring a young maid with him. So soon as this business of the two soldiers had blown over he must take her back to the cottage and the forge of Moston Clough.

"And I shall never see you again?" said the girl, as if stung. "I am a free Romany lass, though born under a roof, and I see not why I should not choose my man and follow him through the world, in tan, and barn, and byre, under hedgerow and into the earth caves. I could follow a man if he were *my* man——"

She stopped out of breath, while John Faa, without a movement of his face, let the sand from which he took his soubriquet, trickle between his fingers. She could not even be sure that he was listening to her, and somehow the thought made her wild.

"If you will have none of me, John Faa," she said, rising to her knees, "well, it is your right. But it is also my right to tell you that I love you, for a true gipsy maid may speak without shame to the man of her heart and blood, no matter how high his rank may be. I have been much courted—my father will tell you that I do not boast. I would make you a partner of whom no Romany, even of the blood royal, need be ashamed."

Silver Sand was still silent, but there was a troubled look on his finely-cut face. His hands, usually so still, twisted nervously. He knew the girl was well within her rights as a gipsy maiden freely declaring her choice, but how to answer her he knew not. She interpreted his silence after her fashion, and, lest he should forbid her to continue, she went on, hurrying her words.

"Consider," she said. "I do not ask for recognition

or to be received among your grand folk. You saved us from the gorgiko law, and you are hand and glove with the head judge of these parts. You are learned in all the learning of their wise men, as befits the Prince of Egypt. You sit at his table and you talk with him of things high and strange, which Juliana Stanley never heard of nor could understand. All this is right and proper for you. It is your winter under the roof, and clipped about with walls. But you will need your summer also. Then you will yearn for the tent pitched in the glade among the birches, the trout streams running briskly, where you can be free as the birds overhead, or the great white clouds sailing by. Then, too, you will begin to bethink you of the girl who is waiting for you with fire bright and pan clattering, the scent of the fried bacon and bread, and all the love she has been keeping for you since you and she were fast-handed and she gave you her word."

The chief of the Faas muttered something a little shamefacedly.

"A 'Gorgio' marriage, John Faa, what Romany maid cares for that when her man is of her own blood? There is one law for Egypt and another for the stranger. I should not stand in your way, nor keep you from your destiny. But I should be ready to welcome you when the need for the white tents tingled in your blood and you longed for the airs of the mountain and the salt, blown fresh and wet up from the sea."

She paused for breath, and Silver Sand, greatly perplexed, extended a hand to her, which she pressed to her lips.

"You grant my request—you will be my man—at least among the Romanies? I do not tie you for the rest of your life, so be that no girl of our blood comes between us. If she does, let her look to it."

"Juliana," said Silver Sand, speaking at last, "I acknowledge your right, and I see not how to refuse your

service. But I must be plain with you. There is now no thought of love in my heart for you or any other woman. I have lived in a world of books, and then in a world of fighting and riding. Scholar and soldier I have been, but never has a woman made my heart beat faster. I warn you that I may meet a woman who may awake the Unknown in me——"

"I do not care," cried Juliana, "so that you are mine now. If the woman is a gipsy, as I say, let her look to it, John Faa, for I, Juliana Stanley, will fight for my Romany. If she be white-faced and of high station, learned like yourself, let her commune with you on what I shall never know. I shall in full content be your Romany wife, and the bond shall hold for me, but not for you, so long as you look on no other gipsy with the light of kindness in your eyes. Do you accept, John Faa? If I am the first who has dared to ask, I have already a right upon you by our law."

She lifted herself up, and, pressing her hands upon his shoulders, kissed him long upon the lips.

Then she sprang to her feet, clapping her hands gleefully. "King of the Gipsies, I am your gipsy wife!" she cried.

IX

TWO ON THE MOUNTAINS

JOHN FAA knew the law of his folk, which is the same from the banks of the Indus to those of the Tay. A maid of spotless character has a right to choose her man if he be unmarried. His only way of escape is to wed early, so that he is safe and sheltered from sudden attacks. But Silver Sand had lived too long among the outlanders. He had forgotten many of the customs which his forefathers had made in their wisdom, and had judged the ways of Romany women by those of more sheltered lands, where women are content to wait and wait and be silent, hiding their loves, damping down their desires.

He knew, however, that all his people would approve Juliana Stanley, and that as a true Egyptian, commoner or of the blood royal, there was no way out for him without shaming himself and having the blood of Juliana on his conscience. For a girl refused, specially one of Juliana's birth and spirit, would certainly kill herself to escape the contemptuous eyebrow and the pointed finger. She had declared herself his for life, and (as betwixt Rom and Rom) that is sufficient. She had only to do the same before witnesses, and they were man and wife, according to gipsy law—married, as the Scots called it, "across the tongs."

So from the shore of the loch, glittering in azure and white, they took their way towards the House of the Dungeon. And as they went the hand of Juliana stole into his and gripped his fingers.

They came suddenly upon a group looking over into

the grey changeful haze of the Dungeon of Buchan, and, at the sight of the red-eyed smith, her father, Juliana cried out from afar, "I have asked him. He is my man. I am his gipsy wife. So long as he bides among us no other has the right to light his fire or make ready his meal of meat! See, we are hand-fasted and promised according to the law of Egypt, which says that, being a maid, once in her life a woman may, without shame, ask a man! This I have done! Bear witness, father, and you others—I have asked and have not been refused!"

Silver Sand walked forward, feeling within him the passive soul of a sheep driven market-ward. It was the first time that his chiefship had turned against him. Hitherto he had dictated among all the tribes, and the laws of Egypt had been with him. They were so now. He could beat or even slay this girl who put herself in his hands. He had only to bid her dig a grave, and in that grave he had the right to bury her alive—nor would she complain of his harsh treatment.

Only, the training of the people of books and cities was deeply impressed in him. He must walk according to the custom and the law of Egypt like any other Rom, and he could not rid himself of this net cast about him by the methods of Egypt. Besides, was he so sure that he wanted to? There were indeed many who would envy him, and with good cause.

Large black eyes, that flashed and languished alternately, the figure and easy carriage of Diana sporting with her maidens, tall and supple like a young tree bent by the winds, her dark rippled hair loose and straining in the wind of these altitudes—that was Juliana Stanley, by whom he had been formally "asked." He knew well that the connection was one which a man so high placed as himself could repudiate at any moment after a certain time without giving a reason. In that case the shame would fall not upon the man, but upon the woman. All Egypt would take his side, and the girl would resume her

place in her father's caravan or in the blacksmith's cottage in Moston Clough.

But such a solution seemed impossible to Silver Sand, because of his training among the outlander—the Gorgio of France, with his absurd prejudices and childish courtesies.

All unwittingly he had aroused in Juliana's heart something that was at once tigerish and maternal. If he told her to kill a man, that man was as good as dead, and if he denied or deceived her, she would plunge the dagger into herself—or perhaps even into her lord if he drove her to despair. Juliana was a fine animal, with something of Cleopatra about her, and still more of the heroines of the Greek tragedies he had spent so much time over among the good monks of Issy.

Certainly there was a weak strain in Silver Sand somewhere—perhaps it was that he fell between two incompatible civilisations, having the blood of one and the education of the other. He could not bear to make a woman unhappy. Besides, he had not another attachment, though instinct told him that this was not the one for which his soul was on the watch.

But from that moment of the declaration before witnesses all the band treated them as married persons. Juliana had made her choice, and, if anything went wrong, the penalty would be hers to bear. The young Lancashire lads who had pretended to her hand and made part of her father's band, went about sober and sullen. She had been snatched out of their reach, and that by her own act. They, too, knew the laws of Egypt, and recognised that there was nothing to be done—that is, till they should see if, within the year, the Gipsy King did not use his right of sending her back to her father's *tan*.

* * * * *

Then began a time of strange experiences for Silver Sand. He had been a recluse and a solitary upon the

earth. Reared among monks, he had in spirit something of the *monachal* about him. It was, therefore, passing strange for him to find himself in the depths of a green dell, sitting idle with a book of classics in his hand, while Juliana, with happiness in her eyes, and a flush upon her face which told of desires fulfilled, flitted here and there among the trees, brought water from the brook, or buttered the saucepan for the trout her husband had caught earlier in the day as they tramped the moorlands together.

At first Silver Sand had attempted to take upon his shoulders part of the burden of adjusting their equipage, tent, ropes, cooking utensils, upon the two strong asses they took with them. But Juliana had flung herself down on the heather in such a tornado of weeping and protesting, that he had been obliged to allow her to do it herself. And indeed she loaded the beasts far better and quicker than he could.

Did he mean to shame her before all the women of her tribe? Did he think her weak or unworthy? She would kill herself. She knew a place where the sands sucked you down. If he did not love her as a Romany ought, if she offended in anything, he ought to beat her, to kill her—but he had no right to shame her.

It was the same in camp. Juliana would not permit him to fetch even one of the heavy pails of water from the spring or burnside. He had done enough by permitting himself to be waited upon as became a woman of the gipsies who had "asked" a man.

So after a while our solitary Silver Sand, who found himself watched and tended like a spoilt child, became conscious of a strange feeling of contentment. He explained it to himself thus:

"So did my fathers through the centuries—it is all familiar to my inward eye—the running water, the tall, dusky trees, the busy girl. So they formed their women

to labour for them, and themselves to accept service centuries before they came out of the East."

Then, when the meal was ready, and the whole glen filled with the scent of the trout fried in oatmeal, or the rashers of bacon and eggs, Juliana, with a proud humility, would summon her lord to his meal. She never sat down with him, but spread the cloth on a tree stump or a patch of dry grass for himself alone. This was her privilege—to do everything for him. She served him, silent and happy, foreseeing and anticipating his needs, handing the salt at the proper time and clearing away the *debris* with swift unobtrusive readiness.

During these seasons Juliana's face wore a look of bliss. She had her man to herself, and she alone was there to care for him. She was the blessed among women.

Busy as she was, guarding and guiding the donkeys on the long journeys they took, as Silver Sand went from tribe to tribe, she would keep her eyes about the moorland for the eggs of plover and curlew. And it was rare that she did not collect a dozen at least in the sack of cord which she wore at her side. She separated egg from egg, wrapping each in thick cool moss and tying the whole about with strips of willow bark so that they would not shift. As to the main provisions, Silver Sand must see to those. He either bought them at a farm or cothouse on the way, or shot a hare, a rabbit, or a brace of muir fowl, which Juliana instantly took possession of and carried hidden away among the paraphernalia of her cooking apparatus on the back of Darsie, her favourite donkey.

Once or twice, as he had opportunity, Silver Sand wrote to the Sheriff at Lochnaw Castle. He was (he said) upon the business of Egypt, and busily enforcing the King's peace where Sir Andrew's writ did not run. All which was true enough, but in none of these letters

was there any question of Juliana or the wondrous new life he was leading.

It was not long before the taste for the free air, the blowing wind, the broad couch of heather in the lea of the wood, the simple fare, and the glorious uncertainty of the life, began to take hold upon him.

Older and more primeval ideals called to him. His blood rose insurgent, and he felt that he had never been so happy before, as he was with this girl who with smiles and gratitude, made herself his slave.

Sometimes, as he smoked over the fire in the evenings, she permitted herself to draw near, and, if he indicated a heather tuft or a fallen tree with his hand (as he always did), she would seat herself opposite him, but always at a markedly respectful distance, like one who is there on sufferance. All the same, it was clear that Juliana Stanley was ecstatically happy. Furthermore, that she did not intend to give him any excuse for sending her back to her father.

When they talked, she showed herself insatiably curious as to all his past life in foreign countries. She could not get over the thought of all those hundred monks living in that great house without any women to serve them. How did they make their fires? Who prepared their meals? It was a strange idea for men to be without women.

"But I, though no monk, was equally alone till you chose me, Juliana!" said Silver Sand, laughing at her serious and vaguely disgusted expression.

"Ah, that was different—a young man, being marriageable and no woman-seeker or petticoat-follower, waits till he is asked. You were waiting for me—for me, John Faa. I am glad, I am glad. Do not fear—this is the crown of my happiness. No woman of the wandering folk is so happy as I. Yet I know that this our life cannot continue always. And I have promised to be no drag upon you. It will be harder now, having tasted

bliss, to let you go. But I know my duty, and I shall wait your return as the need comes upon you—when there remains nothing for Juliana but to notch upon a staff the days as they pass, while she expects your home-coming."

Juliana was never tired of the tale of Silver Sand's wanderings. But she never asked which of the daughters of the Gorgios he had cast a spell over, as his father was said to have done over the Countess at the gate of Cassillis.

Fain would she have spoken, but the words would not pass her lips. She was content with what it should please him to tell her, and her parted red lips and heaving breast were the measure of her interest. So that the recitals of strange doings were often prolonged far into the night.

Silver Sand took a liking to these seances. The racing clouds, the surge of the wind among the tree-tops, the moon looking through, as the big white banks of vapour gave way and revealed at intervals the starry lift, the silence of the woods, the wild scent of the gall bushes and the heather, the unwonted and still strange influence of the girl nestling close and closer beside him, all affected his imagination with a sense of something gay and bright which he had come near to winning, and which alone made life worth living.

There were other things in the background, heavy vague things, shadows that waited by his path, not to be evaded. But for the moment he had not come to them. They could wait. The wild wood and the wild girl for him! That which would be, would be. But in the meantime, the waters ran, and the air and the laughter of youth were better than all books and all shadows. Besides, he had had little of enjoyment, little of freedom hitherto. For a little while, just a little while, the gods would be good to him, and he would be grateful, taking what they gave

X

HAND-FASTED—HEART-FREE

JOHN FAA was John Faa in these days, the true heir of the man whom King James the Sixth and First had made Lord and Earl of Little Egypt. He interpreted the Law. He composed quarrels. He settled the blood-money which the Lennoxes were to pay to the Shirmers-Gordons for the dead man they had left behind them after the last New Galloway Fair.

His was a Law which had never been written, his a judgment against which there was no appeal. He alone interpreted its spirit, and that, without any help except the statements of the two parties, who held up their right hands and swore that their lives should be forfeit if in the smallest matter they misled their chief.

Strangest of all, his decisions contented both parties, and they often adjourned together to the nearest change-house to drink a burial-service and sing a "dirgie" to the extinct blood-feud.

On such occasions Juliana waited on her lord with a pride in her heart that she hardly troubled to conceal. Almost she wished that in some congress of angry parties to a vexed cause, he might be attacked, so that she might spring in and save him. But, in spite of internecine quarrels, they were all good Romanies and knew what was due to the chief of the Faas.

Sometimes, indeed, they forgot to pay their dues, but not so often as formerly, for the new institution of the King's revenue duties bade fair to make their wandering manner of life an extremely profitable one.

It was in this very matter that Juliana gave the earliest proof of her capacity and watchfulness.

"How is John Faa, who is your Lord and Earl, to hold up his head among the outland Gorgios if you do not pay him his tithes? You, Curtis the Kemper, you took sixty shillings of the King's sterling money at Muirkirk Tryst. That makes six that are due to my man and your chief—John Faa! Pay your dues, like a true son of Egypt."

"Sixty shillings *Scots!*" squealed the weasel-faced little man, in an agony of anxiety and fear.

"Sterling shillings," Juliana repeated, calmly, "and they are in your wallet now. I know those who saw the Strathaven farmer pay them over. Take care I do not go farther back. My man has been over lenient, and has forborne to ask. But that is past and done with. I am here—Jasper Stanley's daughter—and I shall ask for him. Ye know his yearning care for you and the like of you, his sore travel and labours. Were it not for John Faa and his friendship with the great of the earth, you would be linking it this moment among the tobacco-plants in Virginia, a naked slave shrinking from the driver's lash!"

Without a word Curtis paid over the six shillings, which, in the most business-like way in the world, Juliana put aside in her kirtle-pocket for her master.

"And, mind you," she added, "do not let me have to find out and come asking, as if the wife of John Faa were a beggar's brat whining for a bawbee at a great man's door. If John Faa be not within reach, ye shall come to me with your tithes, or else send them by the first sure hand. And I warrant you, Kemper Curtis, that in this Scotland and as far south as the Cheshire Dee, any Romany hand is sure. So on that score there need be no keeping back. John Faa will make all of his blood-kin his bankers and go-betweens. Nothing shall be lost or mistrysted in Egypt any more. When the Gorgio is spoilt, that is a matter which concerns you and the out-

lander's own justice. But my husband shall see to it that Egypt shall not cheat Egypt, and I, Juliana Faa, that Egypt does not cheat him, who is my Lord and the Lord of all of you!"

So it came about that when they sighted a town, or even a sizeable clachan, in their wanderings, Juliana would tie a red kerchief about her head to hide the damascened gold bands (which only the women of the Faas might wear), lest they might prove a temptation to the rampaging raw stots of Highland soldiery who were ever ready for plunder. Then she slipped off into the town to find this merchant, and that other dealer, leaving Silver Sand with his back against an oak, or couched under some great boulder, enjoying a sweet blink of sunshine and rest after a hard and bitter day, the winds lown and laid about him, and his soul at peace.

Those of his first hand-fasting were good days for Silver Sand. Juliana was a mother to him, hedging him about with her protections. She was proud of him, as a mother is of a famous son. Also, she was full of the same anxieties for him, and always set him before herself, and, indeed, all else.

After an hour or two she would return from the town with her net of cord bursting with all that was to be bought of tempting and costly. Was her man not the head of all Egypt, and she would see to it that every Rom should pay tribute to him, as was the law. She even engaged in a famous quarrel with her father, in which she made use of knowledge acquired as Smith Stanley's cashier and chief clerk, to compel that doughty warrior to pay certain arrears of dues to his chief.

Jasper called her an ungrateful wasp, but agreed to a compromise, by which he would pay his tithes on all moneys not yet expended by him or his tribe. And with this partial success Juliana was forced to be content.

But she made good arrangements for the time yet to come, and her father promised to see to it that all the

northern clans as far south as Blackstone Edge, and the mouths of Dee and Mersey did likewise, the Laws and the Pontons alone excepted, with whom he was on no good terms, they being dwellers in caravans drawn by horses, instead of in tents carried by women or asses, as was the good Romany custom all the world over.

But in the very midst of Silver Sand's dream of bliss, there came a black sorrow to blight it, and to call him back again to the world.

At the foot of Loch Moan, on the shore which looks toward the Shalloch-on-Minnoch they were camped, and the two asses which John Faa had bought for their lading beasts were wandering about seeking sound herbage, when there came a runner from the house by Loch Enoch. He had a foot wrapped in a handkerchief plucked from a washing green, and marks of haste were evident upon him.

"I am sent with this letter," he gasped, " the McKetterick and Jasper Stanley bade me find you, and give you this immediately. For it comes from Agnew, the Sheriff of Galloway, and has been following you many days."

He tore it open, breaking the great legal seal, and his eye took in the Sheriff's message.

"From Lochnaw High Wood, that looks towards the sea, where there is a woodman's shelter under a cliff, I, Sir Andrew Agnew, Sheriff of Galloway, send to you, John Faa, Earl of Little Egypt, this first day of May, greeting and fellowship.

"The reason I write is to tell you that I am held suspect by Claverhouse and his corbies for the death of the two soldiers on the heuchs by the 'Rowan Tree,' and especially for allowing the disappearance of the suspected persons that ye ken of.

"They have (for the time that is) utterly deprived me of my jurisdiction, so I hereby release you from your

bonds to produce the man Jasper Stanley and his daughter, with their company. Indeed, I saw well enough that they were nowise guilty, for I am accustomed to judge such things, and the evidence against them was but wind and naught.

"They would help me nothing, even if they were all here, though it might well mean the gallows for them. For the Grahams, and especially that misbegotten David, whom one day I shall thraw the neck of, have used this business as a handle against me to oust me from my powers, lands, and heritages. Thank God, they cannot oust Andrew Agnew from the consideration of his native shire, and even from that of the common folk, of which James and I have daily and touching proofs, more, indeed, than ever I had in my life before.

"But this do I say, John Faa, that if you value your friend as he values you, you will come at once to the high-lying plantation of Lochnaw, and if anything has befallen between this writing and your coming (which may be delayed by accidents out of my ken) you will hear the latest news of me from my friend, the dominie Crogo at the school-house of Leswalt, whom you will do well to take in your course, in any event.

"Keep wide of Lochnaw, where are only the ladies, and a strong garrison of troopers under Captain Bruce. These have put the lady, my wife, and my niece Lilias to more than the wonted disturbance incident upon the placing of a garrison in a gentleman's private house. But nothing of any private insult hath been offered, he (Captain Bruce) being under some former obligations to me, and not so forgetful of them as that roaring rake-hell of a Rob Grier, laird of Lag.

"So, good friend, in the hope of speedily seeing you face to face, I subscribe myself, your humble servitor,

"Andrew Agnew."

Juliana stood a little apart while he read the letter.

Instinctively she felt the gravity of it as expressed on the face of her husband. She knew, without telling, that it was a summons calling him away from her, and even before he had spoken she had summoned to her aid all her pride and strength, so that she might not show herself to him more weak than she had promised.

She gripped herself to keep back the tears which she was determined he should not see. Then, with a very grave face, Silver Sand turned to her, and read the Sheriff's letter. Juliana instantly said that he must go, and that she would abide with her father till such time as he could return to her again. He would thus see that in no wise would she hinder him. Silver Sand kissed her as she stood up to aid him with his dressing for the society of lords and baronets among whom he was going.

"Do not be too kind, John Faa, I pray you, or I shall break my plighted word, which never Juliana Faa did yet."

But even as she spoke the tears were running down her face.

"It was all your fault, John Faa," she said, trying to swallow down her grief, "you should not have kissed me. A gipsy wife does not bargain for kindness from her man, though I knew it was in your nature."

She drew out his handsomest brocaded suit, and would have put it on. But he laughed and said: "What is this, Juliana—to go and visit a man hiding in the woods. He will be wearing homespun himself, if I know the Sheriff. Besides in what a state will I bring it back to you, if I have to stretch myself in moss-hags or on the damp floor of sea caves with the purple dulse dripping over me."

"Oh," she cried, "and I not there to pick it for you. I am a great hand at the dulse, John."

"You are a great hand at everything, little girl," he said patting her hand, "I am beginning to find out that I have married a miracle."

"Oh, no," she protested, with something like fear in her tone, "do not laugh at me. Only a very ignorant gipsy girl, but one who knows her place, and will never lower you either in the opinion of Egypt or of the world."

She smiled upon him now and persisted till she won the battle that he should wear his fine blue broadcloth with brocade facings, telling him how well it became him, and kneeling to fasten the silver tassels at the knee.

"And if you do spoil it," she said, brightly, "what great matter is it? Does not Tailor Byron live in the High Street of Stranraer, and may you deny me if there is not another and a better waiting for you—aye, and paid for on your return."

She laughed a little at the sight of his blank face.

"Oh, it is the money you are thinking of, I know you have let slip the tithes of Egypt for many years, accepting only what the clan-chiefs thought fit to give you. But I am Jasper Stanley's daughter and your wife. I know what has been kept back and what shall now be paid. I kept my father's accounts, and now I shall keep yours. You shall have an honest cash-keeper and doer. See, John!"

She drew from the pocket which swung from about her waist under her red petticoat, a fat pocket-book. She opened the leather band with a proud solicitude.

"The cash-keeper of His Majesty the King of Egypt remits this statement of her accounts, and the money accrued, amounting in all to one hundred and seventy-seven pounds sterling in gold Charleses. Do you take one hundred with some loose silver for the journey. I will keep the odd seventy-seven, which you may send for as you need it. Be nothing afraid. It shall grow like a snowball running down hill when the snow is soft. If you send for another hundred to the house of the Killer, I shall have it for you in ten days, as soon as my messengers have got back out of Cumberland, and from Durham and Northumberland. There are many tribes

there with full *tans* who have paid nothing for years, the Cannons and the Sherards, the Pinsons and the Pynes—besides the Yetholm folk, who have counted themselves privileged, because of calling themselves Faas, and having the protection of the Davidsons, on condition of keeping safe the sheep on their hills and the cattle in the byres!"

Silver Sand took the glowing, happy face between his hands.

"Truly," he said, touching her dense black hair with his lips, "I have gone much about the world, scholared it and soldiered it, till I was tired of books and musketoons, but I never knew that what I wanted was a mate, and sure I am that I have gotten the best in the world when I gat you."

"Nay," she objected, "do not speak of it. It was I who asked and got you, which would be accounted a great shame among all peoples except those who are of the black blood of Egypt. But take the hundred pieces of gold, John. The rest I shall keep against the day of your need."

"Or your own, Juliana."

"Oh, for me—I thank you, but I can provide for myself, and that without frequenting of fairs or fortune-telling of the common sort, for that might hurt you if it came to be known. Not that you are to tell any of the Gorgios—your friends, that you are married to a gipsy girl."

"But so I am, and I am proud of it," said Silver Sand.

"Proud here—proud there," cried Juliana, waving her arms to take in the East and the West from the rising sun to his setting, "you are hand-fasted to a gipsy woman, and so far as Egypt is concerned, she is your slave and servant. But among the great folk, or even the little, this is no marriage, nor the form of one. Remember our compact, John Faa. Free for you, bound for me! I am your representative in your absence, a faithful Romany

wife, but you go forth a bachelor as far as the Gorgios are concerned. Remember our contract, John Faa, pronounced and promised before we made our bond, and without which the bond would never have been made. For it could not have been seemly if I had taken away what was not mine—all the learning and the grace of living among folk who can understand you. I cannot be a fit companion for you in these things, being only the daughter of Jasper Stanley the blacksmith, and unlearned save in gipsy ways. But at least I shall never shame you nor keep you back, and now go, John Faa, for it pains me to have you gone. I would be alone with no need to talk even to you, my own soul's lord. This lad will see me safe back to my father!"

XI

THE WILD MAN OF THE HEATHER

SILVER SAND walked lightly over the heather, looking back often at Juliana, and wondering if the past weeks were not a dream. It was so long since he had been alone, and already the bonds of the flesh knit so close that parting seemed an actual tearing open as of a wound that has been imperfectly healed.

But though he stood waving his broad hat ("as fine as the King's" as she had boasted), Juliana never once turned round nor looked back, but walked on ahead with the young McKitterick messenger, a slim, silent lad, and the pair of laden asses following in her wake.

Yes, it was true (he owned to himself), at first he thought little of it seriously—a girl's whim which he could not refuse, and now he found his wild harebrained maid a woman formed and finished, wiser than himself in a hundred ways, more experienced and of a delicate humility such as, in his limited commerce with women, as a scholar in France, or as a rough soldier in Scotland, he had never found.

Love her? Ah, he could not tell. There was the wrench and the pain of parting with her. These he certainly experienced. But—was there something else? It was somehow terribly unequal, this bond of theirs. She was ready to lay down her life to serve him. He was the one man for her, and had been since the first moment she had set eyes on him. But of this he had experienced nothing. It might be that all this was yet to come for him, and the fear of such a thing shook him to the heart. He stood on that moory hill-top, deep-set amid a world

of spiky gorse, yellow as flame is at night, and watched her go from him. How much of himself went with her? He shook his head sadly, and turned away in his turn, for indeed he could not tell.

He had not gone far across the heather, and was keeping well to the southward, along the edge of the fells, when he saw a man coming towards him, bending low and hiding himself behind every peat hag and knoll of "spritty" heather.

For a moment Silver Sand thought that he might be in danger of an attack. The hundred golden Charleses in his belt made him uneasy. Then he laughed at himself. "The Deceitfulness of Riches," he thought, and took his hand from the butt of his pistol. Who but a smuggler or a hill gipsy would accost any man on the Fell of Kincaid? And to these was he not John Faa—besides being youthful, strong, quick-eyed, and trained to the use of arms?

The man who had been skulking came nearer, so that now Silver Sand could see his wild elf locks straggling out from under his bload blue Kilmarnock bonnet. The hair fell on his shoulders, long and matted, and as it were, dank with night mists, and smeared with the clay of land caverns. Undoubtedly he had before him one of the "wanderers," as it was the fashion of the time and the country to call those who outcasted themselves for righteousness' sake. Of such stuff they made the Martyrs—or rather John Graham and Robert Grier of Lag martyrised them merrily whenever found, spending a dozen bullets upon each martyr, being liberal men where Whigs were concerned.

"Are you of the people?" said the wild man, suddenly standing upright a couple of paces from Silver Sand.

"I am of their party," said Silver Sand, not affecting to misunderstand him, "and I go westward to help one who is outlawed and searched for by the persecutors."

The wild man bounded forward.

"I am he that was minister of Luce, even Alexander Peden," he said. "I bid you welcome. At first I was afraid, having regard to your care for the appearances of this world and the gauds of cleading that you had been of the evil party—or worse still—of the Indifferents? But whom do you go to seek?"

"Indeed, Mr. Peden, I am not allowed to tell. He is a man of the highest position, and is much threatened."

"Do you think Alexander Peden would betray you, but yet—you are right. Whom do *I* trust with my secrets? Who knows how, like a blind mole, I creep and steal through the earth—under it as often as upon it. I blame you not, but I would have news of your own condition. Have you taken the Test?"

"I have not, and it is for that cause that I am taking the crown of the moorland this day."

"That is good, but it is not the one thing needful. The sun may shine on your head, good lad, yet sin may make an eclipse in your heart. The believer is married never to be loosed, but you may be held in the marriage bonds only for a season."

And seeing that Silver Sand winced at this very plain dealing, he added hastily, "I speak of the Spirit and its works—which to the elect are camphor, and myrrh, and cinnamon. Now, answer me, young sir, for have I not been set in your ways as one with a mission to search under the rubbish heaps of earthliness deep into your spirit? Next to the Scriptures, do you make use of the Confession of Faith, the Smaller and Larger Catechisms, Directories of Public Worship, Knox's Elocutions, and the Sum of Saving Knowledge?"

"I am afraid not," said Silver Sand, "I have just returned from a long sojourn abroad and have not had time to perfect myself in Scots divinity, but I shall be glad to learn under your instruction, if so be opportunity is given."

"Do you go to Ireland, sir? For if you do, you will

find me bewailing the misfortunes of this poor land in the parish-house of Ballymena where many godly Presbyterian folk are gathered, as birds flock close in a season of evil weather."

"For that I cannot promise," said Silver Sand, "I do not know my movements."

"Who but stark fools would say they do? But in the meantime and till I or other true gospel minister can give you needed instruction, read Mr. Gray's, Mr. Binning's, and Mr. Guthrie's sermons. You do not know them! Then so much the worse for you. It is a shame to see you so ignorant. There is not a cottier but could master you—even as they did the great Bishop Burnet, according to his own candid confessing. Every hedger and ditcher in the country knows at least the rudiments of truth as expressed very briefly and compendiously in the *Jus Populi,* the *Apologetical Relation, Lex Rex, Aaron's Rod, History of the Indulgence, Testimony against Toleration,* and *God's Revenge against Murther!*"

Silver Sand was staggered with the rapidity and ease with which the ex-minister reeled off this list.

"I am a poor scholar and ignorant," he said, with due humility, "but I learned the Greek and Hebrew languages, and so can read the Scriptures in the originals, or rather I could do so again, for I may have somewhat forgotten."

"Scholarship is a great thing," said Peden, "but there be greater. It is better neither to take up with right hand backslidings nor left hand extremes!"

"Better still as I read it," quoth Silver Sand, "to live in love and charity among brethren!"

"Ah, but who *are* the brethen?" cried the preacher, and without waiting for an answer he turned on his heel and went over the heather, neither looking to the right nor to the left, as if at every step he would avoid those backslidings and extremes of which he had spoken.

XII

HAL OF WINDY STANDARD

IT was Silver Sand's full intention to obey Sir Andrew's direction to the letter and keep wide of the Castle of Lochnaw, but it chanced that Fate, as represented by a fair maid, had otherwise decided.

Indeed coming from the east it was no easy matter to reach the High Wood of Lochnaw without coming within view of the Castle and lake (which son Jamie was one day to drain, but which at that date still lappered and swayed under the windows in changeful mirrorings and innumerable tremulousnesses).

The night had withdrawn itself, and on the meadows whence Jamie was to garner home his hay—a thrifty husbandman of all that his father left in his hand—the larks sang loud, dimpling the sky as they rose and fell to the measure and cadence of their song.

It will be remembered that Silver Sand had upon him a suit made by the best tailor in the country, from a French model which he had brought with him from Paris—the same that Juliana had promised him the like of as the hansel of his return.

It is strange how in fine weather the mere joy of travel and change intoxicates the young. For though in his way Silver Sand had grown to love his gipsy girl-wife, now that she was out of sight, he could bear well enough to leave her alone with her heavy heart and stretch out upon a new and uncharted course.

The human heart is cruel in its early twenties and it must be allowed that Silver Sand tasted the fine morning and the sense of unknown adventure into the thick of which he was making his way.

But through the fair sounds of the choiring birds, the dewy tops of the meadow-sweet clogged with sweetness, and the rustling of the tall grasses, his eye caught the flash and flutter of a woman's robe, held high as if for flight.

He betook himself behind a tree to watch.

Yes, a girl was running swiftly in his direction, and behind her, laughing, yet still pursuing, came a young man flushed of face, but as it seemed full also of merriment, and perhaps a little touched with wine—though at that hour of the morning the supposition seemed to our abstemious Silver Sand most unlikely.

"Mistress Lilias—Mistress Lilias—stop," cried the young man, pausing with his hands on his sides, "I meant no harm. I but cried 'Trill-lil, boys,' and made to fall on, as they say at mess when we drink healths. But I would not have kissed you against your will—no, not for the command of a regiment!"

But the girl ran on, till as she came near to the tree behind which Silver Sand was standing, she turned aside, and to his amazement claimed his protection.

"I saw you from the window of the tourelle of Lochnaw the day my uncle brought you home, and my aunt would not let me come down. Pray protect me from this young fool. He is in liquor and he does not know what he is doing. I am Lilias Agnew, as you may guess, Lilias whom James my cousin will not marry because, forsooth, he loves another—and God speed him!"

The young madam seemed in no great fright, for she stopped talking while her pursuer, though out of breath, was coming up. She seemed curious to see the interview.

"Now then," he cried when Silver Sand had come forward to put himself across his path, "whom have we here, young heather-cock with the French clothes?"

"My name is Percy," said Silver Sand, "and I am a friend of this young lady's house."

"What—of the Percys of Northumberland?"

"Perhaps not by direct descent, but the Earl gave my forefathers the right to quarter their arms," said Silver Sand.

This was true, for the Earl of Northumberland, in the days when the gipsies were everywhere, secured the goodwill of the all-powerful Faas of the Border by a permission to assume his name—as was also the habit of many other great folk, the Stanleys, the Talbots, the Scropes, and even the Arundel Howards. So Silver Sand told no lie.

"I am Hal Bruce of Windy Standard, cousin to the Captain of this garrison," said the youth when he had recovered breath, "and I shall be much obliged if you will explain to Mistress Lilias that I am very much her humble servant."

"If you will bide with me," said Silver Sand, "I am sure that the lady will overlook your behaviour. Mistress Lilias, I shall remain and talk further with this gentleman. I warrant when he returns he will be more fit to carry the colours of his regiment."

The girl gave him a charming smile of thanks, and even nodded to the repentant boy officer, which showed that at no time had she been quite so much frightened as she made out.

"My duty to my uncle, Mr. Percy," she said, dropping him the most dainty of curtsies, and so off she tripped in the direction of the Castle. It seemed to Silver Sand that there was a slight ironic flavour in her voice when she called him "Mr. Percy," as if she judged rightly that it was no more than a *nom de circonstance.*

The young fellow who had called himself Hal Bruce (and who came of a good family on the borders of Ayrshire and the Stewartry) looked after the girl with unconcealed admiration.

"There's the girl for me," he cried. "Hark you, Percy, they are a Puritanic lot, these Agnews, and I cannot bring myself to give up wine-cups for psalmbooks so early in

life. But if I thought I could get that girl—rot me but I would do it—aye, and pray with the best, Percy. You are no Puritan—that I can see. But I see not that there is much Percy about you either. The Percys are all rose leaf and shell pink, while you (if it displeases you not) are as tawny as a Turk—may I slide down St. Paul's steeple if you are not!"

"I see not what the devil's service it is to you to know whether I be Puritan or no," said Silver Sand, curtly. "But I am not ashamed to tell you that I was bred of the Duke of York's religion, by the Sulpicians of Issy——"

"Of Issy—that's in France," cried the young man, "did I not tell you I was none so drunk. I knew these for French-patterned small clothes as soon as I clapped my eyes on them. I say, come your ways into the Castle by the back door and let us have a drink. Which will you have—a tankard of ale, a black jack of wine, or a *caup* of spirits neat?"

"None of them, I thank you," said Silver Sand. "And if you will take my advice you will get your man to pump well upon your head at the horse trough, and after that go and lie down. You have had enough sack, grilled bones, and red pepper for one night."

"Good advice, Percy," said the youth clapping him on the back, "but I cannot take it, sir. I am on duty—off-officer of the watch (though there is no watch except two privates, who are both in the pig-stye as drunk as David's sow). A pretty lot they have given me to command. What is a man to do with a castle to defend and ladies to protect?"

"Ladies to protect!" cried Silver Sand, making belief of astonishment, "why, where are Sir Andrew and his son James?"

The Ensign laid his finger along his nose, and tried to look as knowing as might be possible for one whose hand was shaking and the corners of whose mouth was wickering with weakness after a night of debauch.

"Tell me that you do not know!" he cried. "That is a good trick, like rubbing off one's own tavern score with a turn of the elbow. Why, Percy, do you not know that the colonel and his black corbie brother have loaded Sir Andrew and his son James with the murder of Ellerton and Kidney, two soldiers of my company? And so everybody is out on the hills and along the shore looking for them. I should have gone too, only my cousin of Earlshall said that he would have no such drunken fool riding with him, and that I might stay here and rot—which I take it is not the language of one gentleman to another, even though he be of near kindred. I shall fight him for it—that he shall see. He is a Justice of the Peace, as we call it at mess, and gets drunk only once a quarter. But when he does he is worse than all the regiment—worse even than Roaring Rob Grier of Lag. He is infernally unruly in his cups, my cousin, and now he cheeks me that am like a lamb, all so quiet and easy. Earlshall swaggers and plucks you by the arm into a tavern by force. He drinks swagger-mugger, all sorts of liquor mixed together like pig's swill. He flings drawers downstairs and pelts them with their own pint pots. He breaks glasses, and after calling for the fiddlers he beats them about the heads with their bows because he is too far gone to keep the measure."

"But surely," said Silver Sand, "your commander remembers that there are ladies under his protection here in this house?"

"Ah," cried Hal Bruce, "you little know my cousin. The last time he was piped, he sent a corporal's file for my lady Agnew and her niece, because they had refused to come down and dance with them. If Sir Andrew gets within gunshot of him, I wager there will be bloodshed. He will surely fit him with a shroud and a nightcap. But I keep my head at such times, and mostly he listens to me. For he is afraid of my father who used to thrash

him when he was a boy, and could do it yet. Besides he owes him money."

"Hal Bruce," said Silver Sand, "I mean to go into the house and see her ladyship."

"It is my duty to prevent you! I am ordered to allow no 'intercommuning.' 'Tis a fine big word to say that—even for a sober man. How am I to know that you will not go straight to her husband or her son? And then what a box should I be in, left behind like a poor sot with the whole reckoning to pay."

"You can swear that you were in bed—which you will be in a quarter of an hour——"

"I will not—I defy you, Percy—I will be the slave of no led-Captain in all Northumberland, and so I tell you! I shall bid them sound the clarion and call out my men!"

"Better let them sleep cagily and cosily in the pig-stye," said Silver Sand. "Come along, Ensign Bruce. Remember I was bred to the Duke's religion, and as his Highness is in Edinburgh I have only to write to him to have you put in the boots!"

It was just the kind of threat to impress a drunken man whose wits were still wandering, more than a score of serious arguments.

Hal of Windy Standard rose meekly, pulled up his fine silk hose which had sagged down into his regimental boots, and having fastened the buckles of his knee breeches, followed Silver Sand to the House of Lochnaw, his spurs jingling and his sword most intrepidly insisting upon getting between his legs.

XIII

MISTRESS LILIAS FLOUT-THE-WIND

MY lady of Lochnaw was sitting calmly at her embroidery frame with Mistress Lilias knitting on a little stool beside her. Silver Sand made due reverence and told her that he had come from very far away in answer to a letter from the Sheriff. He was anxious to know if he could take any news from the Castle to her husband, or carry any parcel to him—both of which tasks he would safely perform.

"As you see," said Lady Agnew, "they abuse the Castle and tear down even the fine oak carvings for firewood. They cut and hack the mantelpieces and window-sills, but to us they do little harm—none indeed that cannot be passed over with a smile and a little compliance. I would not have you tell Sir Andrew anything that would give him the idea of returning hither. So I beg you to deliver him this message word for word. It will comfort him more than aught else—mind you let it be *word for word*—No "My Ladyings,' or you will lose the flavour by the way. This is my message:

"'*Jean Hay kens the track o' the auld grey charger! She will mount and ride after him when there is need!*' You have it? Then repeat it exactly, for it is a signal between us, and he will laugh the more and think me the safer when he gets it by word of mouth. As for a parcel, Lilias, haste thee, like a good lass, and get the Sherra's shaving gear. Or no, I had better go myself. Bide here and see that this young man whose name is so difficult to come by, does not run away."

Smiling, the stately lady of Lochnaw glided away, as

light of foot as when she had come there from Park, a quarter of a century ago, and Silver Sand was left alone with Lilias. He looked at her with interest, and acknowledged that she was worth any man's regard.

Lilias Agnew was a blonde of the palest, with hair like the ripe August wheat on the sunny lands of Holywood down near the Nith. She had deep blue Irish eyes, being come of that side of the Agnew house, and having brought with her more than a dash of Irish recklessness and insouciance.

"I am not so frightened *now*," she said. "Indeed I might have managed as it was, only that I spied you come stepping along so grave and stately in your French clothes. I wanted an excuse for a closer look at my-lord-the-Earl-of-Nowhere-in-Particular!"

She laughed and showed her small white teeth as she spoke.

"You forget, madame," he answered very gravely. "I am Mr. Percy from Northumberland, and though you will not believe me, I assure you of my right to bear that name."

"Well, so be it, Mr. John Faa, Silver Sand, Percy, Earl-of-Anything-You-Please! Will you take a message to my cousin James, who ought to marry me but will not. You need not tell him that I am dying for love of him, because he would not believe you. But you will remember to bid him kiss his Mary Montgomerie for me, at least twice over, for each once he does it on his own account. But tell him I am a poor deserted female on whom no one will have pity, and that I pass my time in wetting my kerchief with unavailing tears. See!"

She held out a handkerchief no larger than the palm of her hand (which was not large), and let him respire the fragrance at his pleasure.

"'Tis like the roses have gotten into my tears," she confided. "Because often I sit under them and garland my hair with them in the garden by the Lake!"

She spoke these words with a freshness and charm which quite took away from them any formal character. It was her gift and she used it with a delicious unconsciousness which became her to a marvel.

"You are a d'Agneaux, not an Agnew," said Silver Sand, charmed in spite of himself. "You make me think me back again at Issy with the St. Sulpicians."

"Then the good fathers must have talked a great deal of nonsense," said the girl pertly, looking up from her embroidery.

"There were ladies at Issy," began Silver Sand.

"Ah, now you interest me. I wager you did not see them in the monastery parlour nor kiss their hands from behind the grille. Ah, Percy, have I caught you? Go on quick and tell me before aunt comes back with the Sheriff's chin-stropping gear. I am all pins and needles to hear!"

Of course, Silver Sand should have cared nothing, and immediately fled temptation. But then he was not conscious of any harm done to his memories of Juliana. The girl was all wit and *esprit,* and it pleased him after so long to be once more in France.

"One was called the Marquise de St. Lo," he said, "and another the Lady of Belle Isle and the Isle Marie!"

"They are my cousins," cried Lilias, "and Madame de St. Lo taught me to speak good French. I had not thought we were fellow students, you and I. But you, I warrant, were diligent, while as for me my study is a walk that is woody, where the sun shines through and the birds sing. I was not like you of whom it might be said:

> "The Muse shall be thy bed-fellow,
> A bundle of books thy pillow."

"The ladies received us at the good fathers' instance," said Silver Sand, without attempting to follow her quicksilvery talk. "That is, all of us seniors who were not

bound for church promotion, and the wearing of the black soutane."

"Madame de L'Isle Marie is young and pretty, I have heard say!" Lilias let fall the words inquiringly, and in a casual manner. She also kept her eyes down and feigned a great diligence with her embroidery.

"On the contrary," said Silver Sand, "she is old and is given to snuff-taking, but of a spirit marvellously young and witty."

"Ah," sighed Lilias, "how can I have been so misinformed?"

"She has a daughter-in-law, Charles d'Agneaux's wife, who is a great court lady, but she lives at Versailles, and I never saw her except once in a box at the theatre of the Palais Royal, when Poquelin was playing the *Miser*."

Lilias rose to her feet and looked out through the open window at the breeze ruffling the lake, and bending the heads of the meadow-sweets on the grassy holms.

"How strange," she said pensively, " to hear of Paris and the Palais Royal, in a place where no one talks of anything except the price of cattle and the persecution of the Saints—which you must pronounce 'Sants'!"

"Oh," said Silver Sand, smiling. "Louis the Grand has his own persecuting to do, and if you have any Protestant or even Jansenist leanings, you are infinitely more safe in Lochnaw, even with Captain Bruce's troop quartered upon you."

"I am not complaining," said Lilias. "Though I shall never love the place again. They have cut down the trees in the park, red fir and black. They have kindled their fires with the bushes where my dear hedge-sparrows nested. They lie drunk in the thickets, where I fear to go. Now you are come and that is better, for you can talk to me of Paris and Madame St. Lo. But you will be gone in a moment, blown from us as the leaves that are blown. A maid in this dear drear land has never anything she wants—or at least she has it not for long.

In France she has her heart's desire, especially if she be married—*after,* I should say. But here, it is only big boots stamping, spurs jingling, and tender consciences fleeing. Who would have suspected either you or the Sheriff of a liking for the Shorter Catechism? Yet there you are off like the wildest Whigs to the dens and caves of the earth, leaving us poor women with only our finger-nails to bite—and a poor meal we make of them! Never a thought for us so that you can conscientiously disobey the King!"

"We do not disobey the King," said Silver Sand. "But his ramping, stamping dragoons, who come down to put a pistol to our heads, saying, 'Believe this or that, or you shall be shot dead!' It is no great matter to me, nor I fancy to Sir Andrew, whether bishop or presbytery wins out ahead—only we will not be ordered to believe this or that on the order of a King who does not believe anything."

"Ah, in France 'tis better managed. Our grand monarch believes just what his latest lady-love tells him, and so somebody has respite during the favourite's reign —unless, that is, she changes her mind!"

"That is true, Mademoiselle Lilias, but I do not think you ought to have known it."

"You should hear my cousin of Belle Isle talk, she does not spare his most Luminarious Majesty, I can tell you. Poor Roi Soleil! But I know I am too young to talk in her strain. You are a stranger, and—an earl! Lord, how wicked I am not to have remembered! But I will amend, and you shall carry a good report of me to my uncle."

She put her finger in her mouth and pulled down her lower lip, sinking at the same time the corners of her mouth:

"Lilias wants no vain delights
No more she thinks of folly.
Nothing in the world is bright
But only melancholy."

"Well tagged," she cried, breaking out into a ripple of silver laughter like coins flung down on a counter. "But Uncle Andrew will not believe it of me. He will only think I have been practising on your innocence—the innocence of a pupil of Madame St. Lo! Ah, save me, gentle gods, who come from mead and stream!"

She apostrophised the view from the open window sash with extended arm.

"That is the way the pretty Demoiselle Bejart does it at the new Palais Royal," she explained. "But do not call me, 'vapouring little fool,' as Uncle Andrew does!"

"And what does Cousin James say?"

"Oh, he cares not a joiner's shaving from a cart shaft. Though indeed, and indeed he ought to marry me—so it was nominated in the bond, and I sit often all night and weep, because of his hard heart! Oh, you may laugh. I am a maid of very deep feelings. I would have you know—and I do not see why Mary Montgomerie should be preferred to me, though she is an Earl's daughter, and will have a dowry. I shall only have my simple childlike modesty, a sweet blue flower with a heart of gold! But, maybe somebody will think that just as good as Cis Montgomerie's portion of the Eglinton estates."

"That, I think, is highly probable," said Silver Sand. "And now if you have done flashing through all your moods, you might tell me where your uncle was when last you heard from him."

"Oh," she cried, holding her thumbs close together. "I am not allowed to know lest they should put these in the thumbscrews, and then I should tell. Aunt is sure I should, and indeed I am not very certain myself! So they tell me nothing."

"You would not betray your folk if it came to the pinch," said Silver Sand. "It is like this, my little lady. In Paris you thought of costly gowns, with kirtles, carknets, and suchlike noble gear, and now when put to

it, you go simply robed, think nothing at all about the matter, and look a thousand times handsomer."

"Much you know how I look in Paris, Master Percy! Why, you have never even seen me walking the faubourg, as sweet and sumptuous as a Christmas pie, all tricked out by Madame Berthe, and ogling the world through a double lorgnette with the glasses out."

"What nonsense you talk, child," said her aunt, coming back. "You know well that you never did anything of the kind, save to make that foolish young man, Hal Bruce, keep his place. And your uncle's friend is a very different person, I am sure—or he would not have the right to call himself so."

"Oh, very, aunt," said Lilias with excellent show of contriteness. "But did you know that he has been educated in Paris, and knows our cousin de Belle Isle, the Demoiselle de l'Isle Marie, and Madame St. Lo?"

Fearing some of her niece's frequent mystifications, the lady of Lochnaw looked at Silver Sand for corroboration.

"It is true enough," he said with a smile. "This young lady and I were just counting our acquaintances with a view to bettering our own."

Lady Agnew looked at him a moment with a veiled consideration. In those days one had to know to whom one was trusting.

"You do not speak much like a covenant man, and Paris is no nursery for such as support the Kirk's Jurisdiction, Vindication, and Testimony."

"Hearken to my aunt," cried Lilias. "Hath she not got it pat? She has been at the back door sending a basket of provender to Sandy Peden, I'll warrant, and now she comes in full of the milk of human kindness to suspect you and lecture me!"

"For shame, Lilias," said Lady Agnew, "if you care nothing for yourself, think that your uncle is in peril on

the wild hills, without a roof to cover his head—besides James——"

"Oh, James" cried Lilias mischievously, "'tis James's own fault, whatever happens! He had only to stay here and marry me—which I should have thought adventure enough for any man—Solemn League, persecution, and martyrdom all provided on the premises! Oh, for James I have no sorrow. Besides he had taken to lurking before the soldiers chased out Uncle Andrew."

"I wonder you are so without shame, Lilias Agnew," said the mother of the injured one. "You know well that our dear James was willing to stand by the old family bargain and that when he asked you to marry him, you refused!"

"No, dear aunt," said the rebel, coaxingly, sliding her arm about my lady's comfortable waist. "It was like this, and you can ask James if I do not speak the truth. He came up to me here in this very room, and says he, 'Lilias, the Sheriff and my lady bid me ask you to be my wife. Will you?'

"Of course I answered, 'Gentle James, I am well-nigh carried off my feet by the whirlwind of your passion and the winged words in which you express it. But seeing that you are so unmanned and desolated with your devotion for me, it behoves me to think for two. Sit down, James, and with your heart beating out hammer-strokes like a new betrothed virgin's, answer me one thing—whether do you love me or Mary Montgomerie best?'"

"James never told me that," said my lady, biting her lip, "nor shall I believe it till I have other proof than your saying so, Mistress Limber-Tongue."

"No, nor did Master James tell you what happened when he hung his head and played with the beard he has not got——"

"He has as good and shapely a beard as any of his age," said his mother, faithful to the absent, "and I am

sure that my James never denied you. He hath always loved you."

"He denied not at all, Aunt Jean," laughed the girl. "Not even when I pointed out how much prettier and more desirable I was than any long-nosed Montgomerie ever hatched under the eaves of Eglinton.

"'No matter, puss,' he said. 'I ought to, I know, and I am as fond of you as of my sister, Grizel—fonder indeed, for you are more of my age and Grizel is all red wrists and elbows at present. *But—but* I want to marry Mary Montgomerie and nobody else!'"

"Dear, dear James," said his mother, dotingly, "how like he is to what Sir Andrew was at his age."

"Not like at all," said Lilias. "Why, I offered to kiss him so as to part friends, and he would not because (he said) it would be treachery to his Mary. Oh, the dolt!"

"Sir Andrew would have had just the same feeling, that I know. It did James credit."

"Not a bit of it, Aunt Jean," said the rebel. "I know better. I heard Uncle Park and Sir Andrew laughing over their port and accusing each other concerning maids they used to court time about, and Uncle Charles of Park strung out a list of a dozen or thereby at which the Sheriff only laughed and denied nothing, sipping his wine like a man well pleased."

"Who were they?" cried Lady Agnew, suddenly serious. "I insist upon knowing."

"Nay, but I have forgotten—none whom I knew," said the girl beginning to regret her loose tongue.

"I will have it out of brother Charles the first time he comes over," said Lady Agnew," still frowning.

"I judge that he will have forgotten also by now. Uncle Andrew blocked his advance by reeling off twenty names to his dozen, and then both the gentlemen laughed and agreed that they were a couple of old fools. After which they shook hands and went out without ever seeing the rat behind the arras—which was me!"

"Oh, Lilias, you shameless girl! And to tell it before this gentleman! Where is your maidenly decorum?"

"Aunty dear" (she kissed her cheek), "there is no much decorum about Lochnaw when everybody wears his company face, that it quite cheered me to see the two old campaigners shaking hands on petty rascalities of thirty years' standing:

"When the bloom was on the orchard
And the May was all in flower!"

At which heresy the lady of Lochnaw very naturally threw up her hands.

"I pity the man that gets you, Lilias. He will need a strong arm and a strong will to hold you, besides a supple rod to chastise you, and make you speak the truth. For I declare it on my faith and honour that I cannot tell the difference between the times you are lying like a fish-wife and telling the truth like a demure maid brought up under a gospel dispensation. So there's for you, and my solid opinion, Mistress Lilias."

"It is a good opinion, Aunty Jean, and solid as the first sheriff tower. And faith, I should be the last to blame you, for sometimes when I think over what I have been saying I am bothered to know what really happened and what just came into my head!"

"It is a dangerous gift, Lilias, and one which I have often warned you against. But you will not alter my belief that you shamefully refused my poor boy's offer of his hand."

"I never refused him, Aunt Jean. I give you my word. I besought him to make love to me, and when he stood like a stucco image planted before me, I even told him what to do and say—how he should get down on one knee (on both makes a man look top-heavy!) and clasping his hands, cry out 'Oh, my sweetest mistress, my rarest of rarities, my casket of diamonds, shrouded in loveliness from top to toe, hear my plea for

pity! Infirm and rude, I weep for thy daintiness. I would conquest the world for your sake—yea, give up:

'Lavender and Rose Marie
Laurel leaf and Fame's bright bay
Only grant me what I pray!'

"But the great stot could only stand there with his bonnet twisting between his fingers and no more words than his old stupid sing-song upon his lips:

"'I would rather have Mary Montgomerie—really I would rather have Mary Montgomerie.'

"And I believe he would have been standing there stammering and shaking, but that I took him by the shoulders, turned him about and pushed him downstairs, bidding him go seek his Mary Montgomerie!"

XIV

SILVER SAND'S DILEMMA

SILVER SAND made his way back to the hills with more than usual care, because he had stayed too long at Lochnaw. He must find Sir Andrew, and he must keep out of sight of any chance spies posted about the Castle to take note of the comings and goings of those who visited the ladies. It was not indeed likely that there were any such at that moment, for he had the word of Hal Bruce, the madcap from Windy Standard, that only two men were left of the garrison. These two he had found snoring in the pig-stye, as their officer had said. Bruce himself was asleep, but still Silver Sand would go by hidden, unkenned, outlandish ways, so that at the end he might come from behind upon the High Wood of Lochnaw, the last remnant of the old Caledonian forest which the district could show.

But the real reason why Silver Sand chose this roundabout road was that he wanted a good long space in which to bethink himself. His being was in a kind of whirl, and the gipsy in him seemed in danger of being forgotten.

Worse than all, there was the remembrance of Juliana. The name came to him with a bitter hurting reproach. In spite of his own will he had been charmed into forgetting her. It was not in the least use telling himself that he had neither done nor thought of any infidelity. He was conscious of having been a different man in that room in Lochnaw Castle. The voice of a charmer wondrously wise had taken him and held him as a bird is taken in a snare. He could see her figure as she stood in

silhouette against the small green window panes. His heart retained as though it could never forget (he knew it would not), the bend of her lithe figure as she stopped to look through the open casement, the small hand laid flat on the sill, and the deep fold of soft white lace fallen back from the bare arm.

No, it was not of these things he thought most. Juliana was to the full as beautiful and as perfect of figure and proportion. But Juliana, simple loving soul, could not think as he thought, talk as he talked—anticipate his mood and change his melancholy into mirth, as this girl could do—all with the quick birdlike changefulness which was at once her charm and her danger.

"If you find me a man whom I shall love *for knowing why I should be loved,* send him to me—that is he for whom I have been waiting," she had said.

And then at their final adieu, "Don't forget your man must take me as I am and love me for it! But give him no hints—let him find out *why* I should be loved, and I will charge myself with showing him *how.*"

So Lilias Agnew had spoken and Silver Sand, who was only just discovering his emotions to be complicated, marvelled as to her meaning with an extreme and almost unworldly simplicity. Had he known Mistress Lilias better he would have wondered less. But as it was he troubled himself exceedingly, and thought deeply of how much Juliana had done for him, of how he loved her, and of how he would rather die than cause her the smallest sorrow.

He was crossing a piece of fine firm turf where sheep had been grazing, and the sun being full and strong he saw his shadow projected before him down the slope.

"Man and shadow——," he murmured to himself. "Shadow and man—and the gipsy, John Faa, is the shadow."

Had he been older and wiser he would have added, "to-day." All the same he was conscious of a marvellous

change in himself. He seemed so far from the man who had dreamed about the camp kettle in the glade, and lost himself watching the upward twirl of the reek among the trees.

He passed an ancient tower of the earlier lords of Galloway, before the Norman came into the land, and pausing a moment he meditated under the ruined archway. Sea-green shadows were being charioted over the slopes—dark-blue on the hills, glaucous on the Sheriff's pastures. Everything spoke of unremitting husbandry. The wild soaring heights and deep glens about Loch Enoch were very far away. Yet in two days he could be there, with luck and fast travelling. He called up before him the loch all azure and white, the thunder splintered cone of the hill of the Star, the huge precipices of the Merrick Spear. He saw exactly where he would turn aside in order to find Juliana, busy with her knitting, or merely sitting wistfully with her eyes fixed on the gap in the hills through which he must return.

Silver Sand put the vision behind him with a sigh. Yes, there was a man to whom all these things appealed, a man who was bound by them, to whom they were a sort of pleasant fatherland—another life, intimate and seductive. But for the moment at least, he was not that man.

He was not conscious of any sort of shame. Lilias Agnew was far above him in race and fortune. All the same, her parting words troubled him with a sense of having missed something, of being passed over when life gave out her best gifts. Besides, was he quite sure that there was not something personal in the girl's repeated injunction to send her a man who would know why to love her? She had meant that to trouble his mind, and had said it with that intent. Only, Silver Sand was too inexperienced to know that. In fact she was as wilful and as perverse as every woman is who is worth possess-

ing, as saith the wise man out of the East, even Säädi of Gulistan.

Manfully Silver Sand took the heather again, striving his best to banish all thoughts of Lilias the enchantress from his mind. Loyally he recounted his happy days with Juliana, the star-filled nights, the wide-blowing free-passing days. They came back to him like the sweeter moments of dreams from which he had been awakened.

He had talked to Juliana, but she had only sat and listened, wistful and worshipping. This Lilias met him with common friendliness, and passed on to raillery and careless maiden pride. Then at the last she had relented and given him a quest so personal and so sacred that for him it was like the search for the Holy Grail.

Yet it was just as likely that from beginning to end she was only laughing at him! What wonder if Silver Sand strode forth upon the heather a sadly perplexed young man. He was in the mood now to turn about and go straight back to the Dungeon of Buchan. It would have been simpler if he had, but then this book would never have been written:

"Bold Heart, fair face,
Ready speech, lack of grace."

The old list ran in his head as he had learned it from his mother, as she taught him his letters, printing them with her forefinger among the meal of the baking board.

But he remembered also the gipsy motto:

"Spare-to-speak, makes no speed,
Blown about like river reed,
Bait-your-hook, cast-your-cast
Bring fish to land at last."

Presently Silver Sand struck into the shore road. It was the longest way, but the High Wood of Lochnaw was not easy to be come at by a young man with so much upon his mind.

Now there runs a bar of hills, wild, heathery, benty, half sand, half rock, interposed between Lochnaw and the sea. As a whole they are called the Knocks, and serve to shelter the fertile lands from the hurling assaults of the winter winds off the sea.

Generally in times more recent these stand stark and bare, but when the tenth Sheriff hid away among their fastnesses, the High Woods were thick enough upon them.

It was the caller evening when Silver Sand pushed over the ridge of the Knock Breck, which is to say the "spotted hill." Thrushes and their cousins the blackbirds, who both go early to bed, were already channering and squabbling in the crotches of the underbrush. But that fly-by-night the blackcap sang loud, and the shrill tits chattered angrily among the pines, still warm and odorous with the long sunshine of the day.

Silver Sand set his feet with a sigh of relief on the silent couches of the fallen pine needles. The glades shut sombrely behind him. At last he was in the way of action, and he would not need to think any more about women. He cursed himself for his folly. He had gone so far and done so well without them—why had he now let them clash and trouble his spirit.

"Ho there, are you Silver Sand?" said a voice behind him, which took him by surprise in the midst of his musings. "If so you have taken the Moffat road to Dublin. I never saw so careful a man. Did you not know that the whole troop, with roaring Earlshall at their head, was off to rout out the decent burghers of Chapel and cause them to pay their fines twice over?"

"All but three," said Silver Sand, shaking hands with Sir Andrew heartily, and with a feeling of infinite relief.

"Aye, and who might the three be?" the Sheriff inquired.

"Young Hal Bruce of Windy Standard and a couple of drunken troopers," said Silver Sand promptly. And

he went on to give him news of the Castle and the messages from my Lady.

"This way with the provender, Silver Sand," said Sir Andrew. "I cannot offer you the accommodation of the Castle. But James, my son, who is an expert in this sort of craft, has sparred a lean-to up against the cliff on the bieldy side, which is very well—though of course not exactly an inn chamber with a four-post bed."

They found the young man busy at the camp fire, and something was frizzling with a pleasant noise.

"Fling out that carrion," cried the Sheriff cheerily. "We will not live on 'braxy' when we can have my Lady's fresh eggs and a flitch of bacon. We are indebted to you for this, and for much else—first and chiefly for the pleasure of your company."

Silver Sand explained that he had been away in the wilds of Loch Moan when the letter reached him. To please the Sheriff he had done what he could with the McKittericks, the Bollands, the Bailies, and the Garpel Smiths. Of course nothing but extermination would keep them from blackmail, or, in default of payment, from cattle-driving. But he had seen most of the farmer folk and made reasonable terms of protection. Sir Andrew would not think that any very legal remedy, but it was a practical one. And a farmer or small landlord on the dangerous marshes did not mind paying a bawbee a head for his cattle, a groat for his horses, and a doit a score for his sheep, if he knew that that was the end of the matter, and that henceforth he might sit snug and easy-minded among his corn-stalks and hay-ricks.

The little shelter called the Gled's Nest, in which the Sheriff abode during the early days of the Killing Time was very cunningly contrived. James, who was a careful lad and experienced in the game of hiding, had designed it with a view rather to his father's years and old-fashioned notions of comfort than to his own needs.

"I lie light in my plaid in any decently dry peat hag,"

he said. "So I travel the faster as soon as I hear the peewits beginning to whimper. But my father has been accustomed to his seat at the chimney-corner all his life, and I dread the rheumatic pains for him."

So he had cleared out the under side of the long shelving rock on the ridge which turns away from the sea. A pair of giant pines grew into and about it, their stout fibres wrapping the roots of the hill and firmly anchored far within. James had filled up with a wicker work of daubed clay the space between the two boles, and the resulting shelter was completely wind and rain proof, with an entrance from the land side into which a man might creep, and another which gave upon a narrow gully leading down to the sea in case of any sudden alarm.

The Gled's Nest, as at first constructed, was long and narrow, following the natural bent of the ridge of rock—giving perhaps in all fifteen feet of length by five or six in breadth, and high enough in the middle to clear the tallest man, where all were tall. It was curious to see the fibrous pine roots everywhere and to notice the care with which the architect had utilised every jutting point and elbow-loop—how hats, bonnets, nightgear, plaids, hung ready to the inmate's hands, all having been arranged with the most courteous filial piety.

On one point, however, James did not mean to obey his father. He would not marry his cousin Lilias, but it certainly seemed that in the construction and fitting out of the Gled's Nest, the lad had made what amends he could.

Silver Sand was full of praise. The floor, rough enough certainly, was nevertheless covered with abundant heather, and the mattresses brought from the Castle were each upborne on framework of resilient branches. Besides the Gled's Nest lay so high and was so thoroughly sifted out by the blowing sea-airs that all was as dry as a gude wife's linen closet.

Here they could sit among the pines and keep their watch on the comings and goings of the Lochnaw garrison, with the certainty that they would not be attacked without due notice, and, as soon as he understood their need, Silver Sand volunteered the aid of his gipsy eyes (which were like those of cats) for the darker watches. He would call James as soon as the first rose showed above the tree tops, and immediately afterwards the primrose banks, from a mere blurring of dim colour, sprang into delicate beauty beneath his feet.

Yet he often stayed awake longer to watch the marvel of the morning across the North Channel. Yonder, a dark-blue line, was the coast of Ireland, the headland of Donnachadee standing out a splendid purple. To his right a crowd of fishing boats would come elbowing their way out of Loch Ryan, and sometimes a great King's ship guarding that half-rebel coast, would go slowly by, bowing to the swell of the Seven Tides, men crowding her deck, hanging in festoons about the shrouds, her white sails blowing out like puffed cheeks, and the anchor swinging at the bowsprit—tall and delicate as a haughty lady balancing in a court dance. From this morning spectacle Silver Sand could hardly tear himself away.

All day long the Sheriff and his young friend would sit and take council. It was difficult to come to any conclusion in the matter of the two soldiers who had met their well-deserved end at the "Rowan Tree" Inn. It was not the guilty the Grahams wanted, but a victim—if possible a prominent victim—whose death would strike terror into the disaffected. And who could serve their purpose so well as Sir Andrew Agnew, the Hereditary Constable of the County?

Silver Sand told the tale as he had had it from the one who knew the whole truth. The Sheriff was silent with the silence of a man considering deeply. By his office he was accustomed to weigh evidence, and this was his verdict.

"It appears certain that this McKitterick, called Killer Smith, slew the men somewhat as he says. There is no reason for him to lie, and it is true that my niece Lilias was that night with her aunt at Charteris. But Clavers and that monkey-faced brother Davvid, whom he has put to sit in my chair, would care nothing for that, even if they had the man delivered them to be hung—of which there does not seem much probability. For *that* is not the satisfaction they want. They want blood, high-placed blood, and nothing will serve them but James there, and me his father. That would put hereditary sheriffdoms out of count for awhile, and with us out of the way, Clavers and Brother Davvid, who had been snapping up the forfeited lands of the condemned, would soon oust her ladyship and make a corbie's nest of bonnie Lochnaw.

"No, Silver Sand, there is no safety in telling the truth. That will not serve us to-day. If I am driven from the Gled's Nest, I must even go farther afield—perhaps up into your Faa's shelter among the hills at the back of the Merrick. That would be a strange turn-about of fortune—that the Sheriff should bide and hide with broken men and outlaw gipsies! Eh, man, what think ye o' that?"

Silver Sand flushed vividly under his olive tan. He could not say what he thought, for he knew the impossibility of the Sheriff of Lochnaw being made to understand the gipsy law which had made his alliance with Juliana so inevitable.

"We will provide, never fear," he said, cheerfully. "The blast is too strong to last. The *bensil* blows down too many trees. They will tire of it, and besides—the life of a man is no more than the breath upon his lips."

But there was something in the tone of his reply that made James look curiously at him. He understood more quickly than his father that a chief of the Faas was found to have secrets into which those not of his blood could never be admitted.

"Well, well, at least they will have to 'head me in the Grassmarket if they catch me," said bluff Sir Andrew. "I am too big a fish for any of their barn-end courts-martial. You, James, and you, Silver Sand, would get the short shrift from one of Earlshall's firing parties, but I should require a Privy Council decision and an escort of gentlemen to convoy me down to the Grassmarket like my Lord of Argyle."

John Faa did his best to combat these ideas, which hung darkly about the mind of the Sheriff. But Sir Andrew put all his consolations aside. He knew the hatred of the land-snatching persecutors far better than Silver Sand. Unless something happened which none of them could foresee, the highest heads in Galloway were marked for the block. And already over their wine, the Grahams and Lag with their roaring tail were portioning out the forfeited estates. John Graham would get the lion's share—grants of Fintry and Lochnaw, of Kenmuir and Lochinvar—David must content himself with Barscob and Garthland. Even my Lord of Galloway sat not too secure at Castle Stewart. That would probably go to his cousin the King's Majesty.

Then there came a curious look into Silver Sand's face as he listened. The blue North Channel, beating out its eternal edge of white foam against the rugged black shores, blurred and faded. He was (as it seemed) in a great chamber, tapestried and curtained. Many gentlemen stood about a state bed, silent and with bowed heads. The man who lay there dying was he whose handsome face had adorned the coins of the realm for many a year. He murmured jests and reached out his hand to be kissed with his old famous careless air.

But somehow Silver Sand, in his trance of the second sight, knew that the man was dying and would presently be dead.

When Silver Sand came to himself as out of a swoon, it was to find his temples wet and the two men bending

over him. The Sheriff asked him if he felt no longer faint, and he could only answer. "I have seen him die!"

"Whom?" both of them said together.

"Charles the King," said Silver Sand. "That is, I have seen your day of release which is coming. It shall not be yet, or I should have seen the end, but the man shall die within the year, and the new King will deal more leniently."

"How are you sure of that?" the Sheriff demanded.

"I cannot tell you. It is the gift of Egypt, and it is certain—so long as we do not use it to see for our own ends."

"I have heard of such things among the Highland folk," said the Sheriff. "But save and except Sandy Peden of Old Luce, who is a prophet and a man of God, we count that the less a man has to do with such warlock work the better for him!"

"Nay, but I dislike the gift as much as any one," said Silver Sand. "Nevertheless all my folk possess it—all, that is who are of the true race, and moreover Sir Andrew, what make you of the dog which swims the loch to howl beneath the tower windows of Lochnaw, and the White Lady of the Montgomeries? I but fell into a dream, and yet I wager you the dream shall come true."

"I see not how that will greatly help us," said Sir Andrew. "James of York is apt to be a worse master than Charles of the Worcester Oak."

"Well," said Silver Sand, "I cannot convince you, but this I know, the vision was sent for our good. We have but to keep you out of the persecutors' fingers for a month or two, and you will find yourself back in your judicial office and ancient heritages. Be wise—you have sent many to the safe shelter of Ireland. Go there yourself. Listen, Sheriff, there goes not a boat out of Loch Ryan but would be proud to waft you across for the love of the Agnews."

"And Jean Hay? What would become of my wife alone in that great castle with only pretty Lilias and a garrison of armed men, not always too sober?"

"Lady Agnew will be rejoiced to know you in safety. Her brother the laird of Park is well seen by the government. He will certainly protect her—as will my Lord Stair, with Monreith and Cassilis—will see no harm comes to her or your niece. It is only your head and your son's that they seek."

"As for me I shall not go," said James emphatically. "There are reasons which make it imperative for me to remain, but I agree that my father ought to go to cousin Pat at Ballikill."

Silver Sand smiled at the young man to intimate that he had a full knowledge of and sympathy with the liens which bound him to Scotland.

"Besides," he said, "I am in no ways affected. I have taken no part in any rebellion, and I can promise to protect the ladies in Lochnaw. I know Lady Agnew would not leave her house to the general plunder which must ensue if she fled—and Mistress Lilias would not leave my lady. We will send you a message every week to Ireland, if only you will be wise and take yourself out of harm's way for a little till the first burst of the storm blows itself out."

But Sir Andrew was not convinced, he summed up the situation in the dutiful words, "I shall do what Jean Hay says—that and naught other."

And with semi-promise Silver Sand was obliged to be content. At least the Sheriff would not again ask for a shelter among the hills of the Dungeon.

XV

THE GLED'S NEST

HALF a dozen times in his life Silver Sand had been taken with these uncanny seizures—once when he was on the eve of being recruited by Claverhouse and, as a proper young man set to ride in his companies—again when in the Sheriff's court room he had seen, like a picture flashed before his inward eye, the innocence of Stanley and his daughter Juliana, and the responsibility of Killer Smith.

But the sight of the King dying in London was something which had not happened to him before.

"I may set up for another Peden the Prophet," he thought. But all the same he had within him the certainty that the days of Charles were numbered—that Star Chambers, shootings and dragoonings were coming fast to an end—he did not know how or when, but the fact was clear and patent within him.

Sir Andrew was bodily comfortable in the Gled's Nest in the High Wood of Lochnaw. He had several volumes of divinity which he judged appropriate to the occasion, besides (what suited him better), on a well-hidden shelf, half a dozen volumes of plays, including Shakespeare, with Beaumont and Fletcher, and the two small folios of Ben Jonson.

But he was uneasy about these if any visitor called suddenly, and would drop any one of them which he happened to be reading into the meal barrel, or behind Jean Hay's kebbuck of Galloway cheese.

Then he would fall to *Knox's Reformation* or the last

treatise of Mr. McWard printed in Holland with the most furious and convincing zeal.

But it was no easy matter for Silver Sand to arrange the meeting between the Sheriff and his well-beloved Jean Hay, without which the stout Sir Andrew absolutely refused to move a step out of the country, even though his life was in greater danger every moment that he stayed.

"Jean Hay alone kens what I should do and what she is able for without me," he answered to their joint remonstrances—for by this time Silver Sand had secured James Agnew as a supporter of the policy of getting the Sheriff out of the way of the hot blast of persecution which was directed against his life.

A good canny man was the Sheriff. Left to himself he would no more have rebelled against his sovereign than he would have questioned the good sense and loyal affection of his own Jean Hay.

But the Grahams had set themselves to drive him into the traps and snares which they laid for his not too wary feet.

Lochnaw was an excellent estate, in good heart and loyally tenanted. It had been well herded for five hundred years by his forbears, mostly Sir Andrews like himself. His office, which he called his "bishopric," was a good and remunerative charge for an outlying Sheriffdom.

Both of these would (as he said) "set up the hungry Grahams," who, not for any great loyalty but simply for what they could get, were fining and confiscating from one end of Galloway to the other.

I am well aware that after our noble William was dead and the Tories came again into power, they made great case of the "Bonny Dundee," and of his dying in the flush of victory at Killikrankie. Now I, Nathan Crogo, know nothing about all these noble deeds of their "Gallant Graham." I only know what the man did in Gallo-

way, and that was neither gallant nor bonny, but only rankly self-seeking and most bloodily cruel.

He never stood up to an enemy unless he had ten times his force, but there was nothing he liked better than to shoot a man in sight of his wife and children, and then in his report, slip in a claim for the dead man's heritage.

Oh, there is small use of his admirers coming to Galloway, or anywhere else in the West, to tell us what a fine man he was. He wrote his own memoirs on our moors and in our kirkyards, and to-day the heather glows the redder and the grass grows the greener for the lavish blood he shed.

And that is the opinion of me, Nathan Crogo, Dominie in Leswalt, and of all men and women, gentle and simple, from Nith Brig to the braes of Glenap—save and except a few old hoary desperadoes like Grier of Lag, still lingering on, sulking and suffering, cursing and accursed, in Lag's Tower. But as to the gallant Grahams—faugh—we know how gallant they were when they stamped their spurred riding boots upon us in Galloway. I am not a bloody minded man, only a peaceful dominie—but when at Sir John Clerk's house upon the Esk, near to Edinburgh, I saw the buff coat which Clavers wore at Killikrankie, with the bullet hole under the armpit, I could not contain myself but cried out: "I would give all I possess and all my children's portions if I had any, to have fired that shot, and so rid Scotland of a cruel monster!"

They hustled me out of the house where was the buff coat, for they were all Jacobites there, and might have done me an injury, but that I was an elder of the General Assembly of the Kirk and Sir James Agnew, son of my patron, was present also.

But I forget the tale, which I have hitherto told as straightforwardly as I can.

The question was how, without danger, to arrange an interview between the Lady of Lochnaw and her husband

and faithful servant, Sir Andrew. It was no use listening to any suggestion of the Sheriff's. He was quite capable of marching straight up to the castle, and entering into the great hall with his head high and all his dogs at his heels.

James and Silver Sand had often a sad and difficult business with him. His son warned his companion that at any moment the Sheriff might break all threads of arrangement and convention, take the bit between his teeth and march upon certain death.

Nor was Silver Sand's task made the easier by the young man's frequent and quite unexplained absences, generally extending over a period of two days. When Silver Sand woke in the morning to take his turn at watching, he would find James gone, and no more would be seen of him till next night towards the stroke of ten, when he would come up like a ghost out of the dusk of the pines, and fling himself down on a couch of heather, being obviously dog tired like one who has travelled both fast and far.

His father never asked him any questions on these occasions. He would only remark: "Poor Jamie, I used to be feared that he would turn out somewhat peefering and over-godly. But, faith, the lad is a man for a' that. I will take his watch mysel' and let him get a good sleep till the morning."

It was obvious to Silver Sand that in order to bring about an interview between Sir Andrew and his lady, he must have an accomplice within the house of Lochnaw —someone more free in their incomings and outgoings than the lady herself, who was naturally more or less under observation by the spies of the garrison.

It was with this end in view that he arranged for his next meeting with Lilias Agnew. He contrived without much difficulty that a missive in his writing, but in the French language, should be carried to her by a bare-legged girl of twelve, whom he had met out on the cliffs

one day. Her head had suddenly appeared over the edge. She carried an empty basket with a folded white napkin in the bottom, which made her errand obvious. But she was calm under Silver Sand's eye. She knew to whom she spoke for she began at once, eager to have the first word.

"You are him that's in hidin' wi' the Sheriff in the Gled's Nest? I see you every day as I come along the heuchs after the goats. But I dinna ken your name. Mine's Mirren McNoah, and my faither is forester to Sir Andrew. Oh, you needna be feared. I hae only been doon the heuchs, takin' his dinner to Mr. Walter Dunning—him that was minister o' Parton parish in the Stewartry. He is doon there in the Doocot Cave, with only the gulls to keep him company, and a poorer place it is than your braw wicker wattles of the Gled's Nest that mony a cotman would be glad o'!"

The girl's head had loomed up suddenly, ruddy as a fire whereat to toast chill fingers. She had begun to speak instantly without a moment's hesitation, and had from the first moment captured the confidence of Silver Sand. Never had he seen a bairn so frank without impudence, or so freckled that nowhere on hands, neck or face, could you pose your little finger without touching a brown speckle. Never a head of hair had he seen like Mirren McNoah's so aggressively, so amusingly, so inspiringly red. Clearly Mr. Walter Dunning, late minister of Parton, was safe in her hands.

But Silver Sand began to consider how he could make her useful. Did she know Miss Lilias? Who but she knew Miss Lilias at the Castle. Was it Miss Lilias he was speering about? Had she not given her the neckkerchief she was wearing at that very moment for outpacing her in a foot-race!

Where did they run? Oh, through the lower woods from the corner of the Loch, and (she laughed aloud at the remembrance) Mistress Lilias was beaten the first

time. Then she fastened up her gown and wilicoats with a string well above the knee and won the return match easily. But that was partly because she, Mirren McNoah, laughed so much that she had to stop to take breath. Oh, but she was a great one, was Miss Lilias. It was not a trifle that would be stopping her when her mind was made up.

"Could you take a letter from me to your Miss Lilias?" said Silver Sand, "and deliver it to her when no one else is by?"

The girl laid her finger to the side of her nose, and looked reproachful.

"You, too," she said, "and I thought you were in hidin' for a saint! Why, you are as bad as that daft loon Hal Bruce of Windy Standard, who gives me a silver shilling for taking his notes to my mistress!"

"And Miss Lilias—what does she say?"

"She only laughs and gives me the letters to read, so that I may instruct myself against the time when I may be getting suchlike myself."

"And does she give you the answers to carry back?" said Silver Sand cunningly.

"Answers—is it now? What foolishness to be speaking! And what would the like of Miss Lilias be wasting her time to answer such trash. She that has half the young officers ready to cut each other's throats, so I'm tellin' ye, and the t'other half ready to cut their own!"

"My letter is no such foolishness Mirren," said Silver Sand, "it is about her uncle, Sir Andrew, who would be much safer in Ireland than here, but who will not go for all we can say, till he has seen my Lady. Now, Mirren, will you help us? Only Miss Lilias can bring it about. The watch on my Lady is too close, and I must see Miss Lilias."

Mirren McNoah, the chief forester's daughter of Lochnaw policies, pulled down her ruddy locks, and with a hither-and-thither toss, cleared them away from her eyes.

"I will do it," she said, "give me the letter!"

"I will write it," said Silver Sand, "I did not know that I should meet anyone so trustworthy, or I should have had it ready. But I shall not be long. Come your ways into the Gled's Nest and sit ye down."

"I think I see myself," Mirren retorted, shaking her sundown aureole, "with Sir Andrew there and the young Master James' e'en boring holes into me! Na, na, when you are ready, come oot wi' your letter, and you will find me stride-legs on the auld fir-tree that grows out o' the side o' the heuch."

Silver Sand went and wrote his letter, using the French language, with the grace and readiness which only pupils of Issy and Port Royal acquire.

"Most fair and sweet-thoughted" (he wrote), "I have an opportunity which I have much desired of writing to you. It is a privilege in itself to do so, but my immediate object is to bring about a meeting between Sir Andrew and his lady wife. He is in danger every hour, and we know not what informers there may be about even on the estate. He ought to retire to Ireland for a few months, colourably to look after his properties there. Now, this he will not do unless his wife first persuades him to go and leave her behind to look after Lochnaw. Do you urge my Lady to this, and on the first night that the garrison lies in Stranraer I shall be waiting for you by the big Irish yew beyond the Loch, where there is a little island of green (or peninsula rather) with the water-lilies winking like stars all about it. Indeed, I shall wait for you there every night this week, because the sooner the matter is arranged the better it will be, and also I know not which night or hour may be convenient or even possible for you. If you have any information or any need to write to me, Mirren McNoah can find me at any time. I understand that she is a friend of yours and

conspicuously fleet of foot, though not always rewarded with an equal success.

Devotedly your Servitor,
"JOHN FAA."

Silver Sand saw the bare, brown legs go twinkling through the copses of the High Woods, and with a sigh turned from the homely prattle of Mirren McNoah to higher, though perhaps less interesting matters.

He went to the cliff edge, and after a moment's keen scrutiny, began to let himself down towards the Doocot Cave where dwelt in grim solitude the late minister of Parton. Old Walter Dunning was, he knew, rather a famous man, and belonged rather to the older theologic school of Rutherford and Semple, than to the younger warlike leaders like Shields and Cameron, called the Lion of the Covenant.

Their antique ministrations rather dropped like dew upon the tender herb, than shook the mountains with thunderclaps. Nevertheless, Claverhouse, having fallen across him at the house of my Lord Kenmure in the Glenkens, had told him that he was an old "greeting varlet," and that if after that day and date he should find him anywhere in Galloway, he would shoot him like a brock. For which reason Lord Kenmure had sent him on to Sir Andrew with a recommendation, and the baronet, not foreseeing the time when they would be near neighbours, established him comfortably in the Doocot Cave, and bade his man, John McNoah, a fervent Cameronian, see to his guest's well-being.

The way down was clearly enough marked by stout iron hoops driven into the face of the rock, for the place had long been used in perilous times as a convenient shelter. Silver Sand brushed his way through tufts of wind-beaten broom. He was scratched and scarified by spiky whin bushes. Sprouts of tufted heather gave him an uncertain hold here and there, but every twenty feet

or so, would come upon a little doorstep of turf quite green and quiet, from which he could look down upon the white surf mumbling and chafing the dark cliffs beneath. Hoary sea poppies bloomed all about in chinks and crevices, and lower still he came upon the rustling russet sea-pink and the salt-water holly, which is blue as an easterly day of March wind. These were all drenched with spray instead of the kindlier dew, and often crystals of sea-salt glittered upon them, brilliant as frost flakes after a frozen December fog.

At last Silver Sand arrived at the cave's mouth. It was quite small, and well set back on one of the smooth grassy shelves like those which had afforded resting-places for Silver Sand on his descent—only this one was at least twice as large as any of the others.

A little man in a black coat, very neat and trim, sat in the corner of the pleasant green apron of turf. He was seated on a small "creepie" stool which, when out of use, he could fold up and carry off under his arm. He was reading a large book which was spread out on his bony knees. This was Walter Dunning perusing one of the famous books of solid divinity of which the author was the great Dr. Owen.

He must have been immensely startled and alarmed by the vision of Silver Sand's feet and legs appearing from above, but of this fear he allowed nothing to appear.

The minister of Parton rose, laid his book carefully on a shelf of the rock with a dried leaf of sea-grass marking the place, and stepped forward to bid his visitor welcome, all in a grave, modest, dignified manner which was characteristic of the man.

He had indeed been a college professor, or at least assistant therein, and still spoke like one, calling the town of Sant Anders, *Santus Andreus,* lengthening out the vowels pleasantly in the Dutch manner. He had also a kind of burr in his speech as though he came from Northumberland, but he was only East country bred and

college trained, which makes a great difference to the Galloway ear, always avid of distinctions.

As soon as he knew that Silver Sand was also in hiding along with Sir Andrew, Mr. Dunning laid aside the little reserve he had shown and spoke freely.

"I am no firebrand," he said with a gentle resignation. "I should have been most glad to remain in my quiet garden at Parton, but when I saw that I could not do so in peace I e'en took my Lord Kenmure's advice and came my way hither. Those who were opposed to me (God pardon them!) barricaded the doors of the Kirk with stones, hung the benches up on the edge of the loft, and but for the uprising of the people would have chased me ignominiously out of my own parish. So I came away willingly enough. For I saw how that if I did not, the malignants would get their will—which was to cause bloodshed among a peaceful people."

Then Silver Sand revealed to him all his upbringing among the monks of Issy, and the difficulty he was in to know the rights and the wrongs of the warring Scottish sects.

Walter Dunning bade him not to trouble his head about the matter. Had he not an open Bible? And the gates of prayer (he reminded him) were not shut. All that was needful would be revealed to one who prayed much and communed much with his own soul. Altogether he spoke so tenderly and in a manner so kindly intimate that Silver Sand was moved to communicate his greater—his greatest difficulty to him. He spoke to him of the privilege of gipsy maidens once during their lives "to ask a man without prejudice to their good name, and on the duty incumbent on that man to content them if he was unmarried at the time of asking.

The gentle professorial man listened attentively, but allowed Silver Sand to continue. He spoke of the great love and kindliness of Juliana, and of the obligation he lay under not to do anything to hurt her. Yet he

could not hide from himself that the tenderness he felt for her, he might equally feel for an affectionate and faithful dog. It was (he said) impossible that he should love her as a wife ought to be loved, and he went about in daily dread of meeting the woman who should indeed be his true mate, and to whom all his heart should go out. He whispered no word of Lilias—that of course, for what confession is ever complete, but he asked Mr. Dunning what was his opinion of his dilemma and what he thought he ought to do.

The minister took some time to consider his answer.

"Sir," he said at last, "I take it that you are a true Protestant, though perhaps not very clearly defined as to sect."

Silver Sand nodded. He was not conscious of a decided preference for any particular doctrinal position.

"After all," said the minister, "it is not a matter of confessions at all, but of right and wrong. If you lived so long among the monks of Issy without becoming a Roman Catholic, it is certain that you are a Protestant of no ordinary strength of conviction.

"But," continued the little man, "you were, as you permit me to gather, born to very particular honour. You are the acknowledged head of all the gipsy folk in these islands. They look to you for guidance. If you interpret their laws, consequently you yourself must obey them. Therefore being 'asked,' you are married according to your own law, though probably not according to the law of the land, since the testimony of your race is not accepted in our courts of justice, which I think a shameful discrimination. Still, undoubtedly in the present state of the law of Scotland, you are not wedded according to the law of the country—still less so in England. But, nevertheless, you are under distinct and grave moral obligations to the young woman, because you are bound by your customs. As to the suppositious case which you submit to me, I think we need not say anything

about that till the need arises. But all the same I do not see, even though you may legally be unmarried, how you can seriously propose to yourself to have two wives, one for the gipsy side of your existence, and the other for your own rank and education, chosen from among those with whom you habitually associate."

The word caused the young man to wince, though the recluse of the Doocot Cave had shot his bow at a venture. Mr. Dunning noted the change in Silver Sand's expression.

"I do not wish to ask for any further auricular confessions," he said smiling. "They are not so common among ministers of the Kirk as with your monks of Issy. Only bear in mind what I say. It is written 'No man can serve two masters'—which according to the best commentators is as much as to say 'wives'!"

XVI

NEVIN'S ISLE

DUSKIER and ever more dusky fell the night. Silver Sand stood among the trees on the promontory called Nevin's Isle, after that wild fighting scion of the house of Agnew who had laid so many thwacks on the retreating backs of the Kennedies in the matter of the Leswalt jurisdiction. Here in his boyhood Nevin had made himself forts, cut ditches and laid down wooden guns before he was breeched, ready for the times when it should be said of him:

"The battle is their pastime. Forth they go,
Gay in the morning as the summer snow."

And Nevin's Isle it has to this day remained, though for the time being, James' draining operations have made but a reed-grown peninsula of it, jutting into a waste of heavy meadow hay.

But when Silver Sand waited there that night, he heard the winds sigh among the tall bulrushes, and felt on his face the blossoms blowing down from the apple trees. For the birds were silent, even the marsh blackcaps suspiciously watching the tall erect sentinel who had ventured into their fastnesses so untimeously

His olive cheeks touched by exposure and seawind, his eyes bright with expectation, and his fine hands thin, nervous, but composed, thrust into his belt, he waited the coming of Lilias Agnew. If he thought of the advice of the man in the tall-crowned puritanical hat, who had

laid down his duty for him in the Doocot Cave, it was so little that he might as well not have thought at all.

Silver Sand could not help himself. He meant to be merely kind and wise—to advise with Lilias as to the meeting between Sir Andrew and Jean Hay. But what should come of the silence, of the dusky night and the duskier eyes which only reflected the stars why, as to these, only the mysterious twilight could tell—and *She* would not. She had listened to too many confidences, overheard too many lovers' secrets to play the tale-bearer now.

She came, and at once Silver Sand's heart beat thick and dull like that of one awaking from a nightmare.

Free and careless as if she walked at noon in the garden close of Lochnaw she came, holding her light skirts clear of the ragweed and meadowqueen, and bringing faint airs with her, as of hawthorn on a dewy hedge or far off bean-fields dreamily sweet.

And as she approached, for Silver Sand the waters ceased to ripple and the breeze to blow. Speech fled his lips and he was silent before her, his purpose to tell her of Juliana quite broken. He could only stand still and wait.

Indeed it was well that Lilias had brought with her all her old carelessness and teasing spirit, for these, more than the wisdom of the wise, conjured the vain dreams which had been overbrooding his spirit.

"And that man you promised me," she began as soon as she had shaken hands. "Have you brought him? Did you trouble to find him? I wager you have never even looked for him, and—I had so been counting on you, Mr. Percy of Northumberland."

Silver Sand had it in his mind to tell her on the spot how fair she seemed to him with her gold hair ranged garlandwise about her head, and her breath as sweet as meadows newly mown. But his tongue had that good reticence, which helps a man more than any wisdom,

to refuse a foolish and wicked office. He began with a clear plain courage.

"I would speak with you, Mistress Lilias, of what I could not write more fully. Sir Andrew must leave Scotland for a season—not as I think for long, but certainly for a matter of months. If he takes my Lady with him—if she leaves Lochnaw, the Castle will be pillaged and perhaps burned. If you and she stay, there is little danger, James and I will stay and watch over you——"

"Ugh," cried the girl contemptuously. "I am obliged to James. Tell him that I will dispense with his care. It will take him all his time to watch over his long-nosed Mary Montgomerie. But for all that (which matters nothing), I think we can manage the meeting. Let me see. On Sunday night the garrison will drink itself helpless. All day the troopers will have ranged the moors after conventicles and keepers of conventicles. One they say—that is Hal Bruce says—is to be held in the ancient Chapel of Loch Ryan, from which place Stranraer had its first name in the days of the Kennedies. Be sure that Captain Bruce will not let that chance slip. Then Peden the Prophet is out on the muirs near Carscreuch, and a detachment is to start early to ride down his followers, and if possible to bring back the Prophet. How do I know? Well, if there is anything Daft Hal of Windy Standard will not tell me for the asking, I am not the wise maid I took myself for.

"So when they get back there will be a fine carouse, from which as is her custom, my Lady will ask Captain Bruce's permission to retire. He will give it because he can the more easily restrain his lambs when a lady is not by to hear him do it. I shall then bring her to this place at the hour appointed, if you will be responsible for Sir Andrew. The danger is not great. The red-coated hogs in the Castle sit down between six and seven, which gives them three hours at the Sheriff's wine——"

"And what says my Lady? Is she willing he should go?"

"Willing *and* anxious," said Lilias, with quick emphasis. "She bids me say she is content to bide at Lochnaw for the sake of the Castle, the goods and gear—which is more than I should do if I loved a man and he loved me as these two do. I should don a page's doublet and ride *point-device* at my good man's elbow—so that all the maids in the hamlets we passed through should fall in love with me and by no means with *him!*"

"Very likely," said Silver Sand, dryly, "*Point-device* and a page's tunic and riding boots would rarely become you, but you could not very well have my Lady Agnew masquerading so!"

At the idea Lilias burst into a thrill of happy laughter, which caused the thrushes to chatter discontentedly at being disturbed on their perches among the old scroggie thorns of the Isle. She put her hand hastily to her mouth, and then as the wind whipped her loosened ringlets about her face, she stood silhouetted against the glowing west, a statue in the attitude the most picturesque of women's repertoire, that of a beautiful girl with upraised arms swiftly ranging abundant locks about a shapely head.

Silver Sand quivered with sudden passion, yet he had seen Juliana do the same with a vague mind and an eye on the blue mists of the distance. But he recovered himself to answer Lilias concerning my Lady's resolve.

"I am heartily glad of Lady Agnew's decision," he said with some formal stiffness as if regretting his own recent emotion. "It will make our task the easier. I shall get round the Ipswich 'hoy' which is now under the Fairland Point waiting for cargo to sail for Belfast Lough. After which we shall whisk Sir Andrew out of all danger from the Grahams before the morrow's sunrise be red."

"So she said to me—I am her faithful messenger," said Lilias, "but remember, I vouch not at all for what she will say on Sunday night after she hath seen Sir Andrew. Then she may not be so willing to let him go."

And the girl chanted softly to herself, with the drawl of the accomplished ballad singer at fairs:

"Come learn of me what's woman's trade
And wherefore they are made—
Their hands are made of woven rush,
*Their minds are made of say.**
Their love is like silk changeable—
It lasteth but a day!"

"You can keep fine and steadfast if you will," persisted Silver Sand, "you can do anything——"

"With a man perhaps—at least Hal Bruce says so. But you see, my Lady is a woman. Lo, in a moment my arrows are blunt, my powder damp, my sword broken at the hilt. What can a woman do with a woman—and such a one as my Lady Agnew? Hal Bruce says—"

Silver Sand growled a malediction upon the young heir of Windy Standard, which luckily was couched in the deepest Romany, and therefore unintelligible to Lilias. But all the same she smiled well pleased to herself.

"After all," she said aloud, "this young Percy is no pagan. So that is the way the Holy Fathers of Issy taught you to say your prayers. I wish I had my little Latin as pat on my tongue's-end. But do not let me stand in your way? Down on your knees and let us have full vespers, or is it nones? I am a good Protestant, but I respect the liberty of belief in whatsoever strange garb I find it."

Silver Sand understood that she was mocking him, and the medicine was that of all others most useful to him for his complaint. He could not be sentimental nor let his

* Say: soie—silk.

heart speak out. The stars in their courses, aided by the high spirits of Lilias, were fighting for Juliana. But for the girl's winsome perversity, Silver Sand might have drifted into irretrievable disaster. But Lilias was no beginner—rather a maid of experience who knew by instinct what was coming. So she kept him at arm's length by saucy speeches and musically contemptuous laughter.

"Well Master Percy," she said, "is there no other name you have gained a right to since last I saw you? I will e'en be going. Have you nothing else you would like to say to me? No? Are you sure? Here I am alone and unprotected—at your mercy, a gipsy's mercy! Blackmail and whitemail, felony and highway robbery—all are within your power. I'll wager you may live to repent such soft-hearted moderation. I have a matter of sixpence farthing in my pocket, and I owe for the very gown I have on—which I hope Sir Andrew will pay for. I dare not tell my aunt, so I must get him to send me an allowance from Ireland—or better still, leave it to-morrow night that Madame Lilly of the Tron Steeple may not call me a mansworn debtor. I promised that she should have the money by St. John's Eve—and if Sir Andrew won't, I must go to the fairies to help me!"

She picked up her gown which she had let drop while she stood on the dry turf to bind her head gear. With a swirling movement she threw the long court train over her shoulder and caught it across her bosom.

"I cannot work—to beg I am not ashamed," she said. "As my Uncle Andrew sowed so he must expect to reap. Besides he has my father's property in keeping for me when I reach the age of wisdom—which he falsely professes is as good as saying never. Tell him that I shall not ask my Lady or James, and that if I am to be prisoned for a *dyvour* (debtor) I shall pursue him before David Graham's court and have a decree of accounting and trusteeship sent after him to Ireland! So good-night

to you, Prince Cautious-Charming, and the kindly providence of all the persecuted and afflicted watch over you. Amen! But lay your lance in rest for me, for I am of all maids the most helpless and forlorn. If uncle will not listen, there is nothing for it but to apply to Hal Bruce, some time—when he is sober."

XVII

THE POINT OF NEVIN'S ISLE

A GREAT and sore task it was to get Lady Agnew down to Nevin's Isle on Sunday night. The good lady was not well proportioned for the secret hidings, disguises, and stratagems to which Lilias took as a young duck takes to water.

Mistress Jean Hay was matronly of build and carried herself like a full-rigged ship going into action. She had so long queened it in stiff Lyons silks and Valenceens stomachers at Lochnaw, that even with a King's garrison in the house could not break herself of the habit of command.

All this dignity was so much to the good when she was dealing with Earlshall and even with Clavers on his swift, unexpected dashes. She was so stately and so well dressed that men who had been born gentlemen left off being swashbucklers, at least while she was in their presence.

And the poor soldiers worshipped her. She constantly denuded her table to send dainties to the sick and wounded in the barn. But to steal out of her own house secretly and under cloud of night was too much for the noble lady. It took all her devotion to her liege-lord to get her consent to the like.

But she went nevertheless, and kept tight hold of Lilias's arm all the way, starting at every shadow and stopping to listen for any sound of pursuit. In vain Lilias cheered her, urging the absence of all danger, and

only the thought of her Andrew waiting for her on Nevin's Isle brought her forward at all.

"Oh Andrew—Andrew!" she gasped, when she had fallen into his arms, "this is terrible wark. You and me to be meeting like malefactors, and the windows o' oor ain hoose shinin' doon upon us, as if to cry shame."

"Wheesh, Jean, there's my life in the turning o' a hair—mind ye that. I ken brawly that jinkin' and jookin' aboot the waterside like lads and lasses in a stackyard are not for the like o' you and me at our ages, Jean. But *must do* will not be argued with! So just compose your mind, Jean Hay, and let us take counsel together, you and me, Jean. For I am wae to think o' leavin' ye even for a season, Jean—as Son Jamie and this young birkie Silver Sand tell me will be for the best."

The thought of danger to her husband (over whom at other times she fairly tyrannised) steadied my Lady, and she sat down on a ridge of piled turf overgrown with primrose plants and loose-strife, which had once formed part of madcap Nevin's defensive works.

The young people discreetly withdrew to the extreme point of the peninsula where they stood close together in a clump of alder trees, out of earshot of their seniors, and tasted the freshness of young delight in the solitary adventure, the danger, and above all, in the proximity.

Somehow or other—Silver Sand is certain that he did not make the advance (yet how think it of Lilias)—their hands were discovered to be clasping each other—the tender tips of her fingers touching his cool firm hands with a slight clinging pressure which went right to the young man's heart. They did not speak much—rather they listened to the shouted choruses from the open windows of the Castle: "Giles and Jone—Jone and Giles —Come woo-all! Come try all!" and others equally choice. But louder still they could hear the beating of their own hearts, and, mysteriously signalling, these were calling one to the other without spoken word.

All that long day when he was discussing the outcome of the meeting with Sir Andrew, and combating the Sheriff's often expressed opinion that Jean Hay would never come a step ("Bless me, I ken her—she has not done siccan a thing since she was a lassie!"), a glad spirit had been singing within him, and he had been put to it to hide his joy. Note that Silver Sand was fully aware of the danger and reproached himself bitterly, even to suffering dire torments. Yet he could not help rejoicing. He had an instinct that, feeling herself protected by her aunt and uncle, Lilias would not flout him as she had hitherto done.

"Never was a man in such case," he said to himself, "yet I warned Juliana of it before she 'asked' me by the side of the waters of Enoch. I told her that I had never known my heart stirred by woman, but that the time might come. It has come, suddenly and terribly. There is no way out, and how to tell her who is watching for me up there—the fondest and the truest, with her pride in her account books, her dues to pay over, and the new suit waiting for me that I may do her credit!"

Yet what was he to do? He remembered her talk of a gipsy wife to whom to return, when the hills should call him back with the voice that lay dormant in the wild blood in his veins. But that solution was not a practicable one. Mr. Dunning's lecture, and still more, his own instinct, told him that no woman would be content to that partage of a beloved man.

He saw that he could not go on for ever taking and Juliana for ever giving. But yet—and yet!

No, he did not see the way out. He was only conscious of the gentle breathing of Lilias, the rise and fall of her bosom, the clasp of her hand, and the way she had of tossing her head to clear the wind-blown ringlets from her brow.

"Ah, if only Juliana were my mother," he thought,

"how I should love her! Or (he added, with some sense of the proportion of years even my sister!"

For he perceived quite correctly that Juliana's love and care for him had in it many of the best elements of the maternal. She lavished it upon him, unstinting, unregarding, and he like a favourite son never for a moment thought of repaying the good she had done him. Why should he? He had not asked for it. It was her happiness. Heaven would record it, and if there was a God, He would reward such unselfishness. What is He for, if not to pay such inconvenient debts?

So as a gipsy thinks, thought John Faa, the King of them all—and there are many others, neither kings nor gipsies who receive the love of their womenkind with equal unconcern, and leave the settlement of the account to God.

This reads hardly for Silver Sand, but let it be remembered that the thing had indeed come upon him unawares. The situation was none of his seeking. He had done his best to fight it off. It was not his fault that his heart leaped and his eyes shone when he walked a few steps by the side of Lilias. Nor was it his fault that he had come to accept the happiness of her presence and society as in a favoured land one accepts the warmth of the sun, the seasonable weather, the former and the latter rain, and the fruits in their seasons.

John Faa was a gipsy king, but he was also a well educated, much travelled, experienced man of the world, with talents and reading, prudence and sagacity quite beyond his years. Yet all these did not aid him to control the leaping blood within him, nor how to be one man and not two.

If only he could have chosen his part and remained John Faa, the gipsy law-giver and law-expounder, he would (and could) have made one woman perfectly happy.

But, there was another man, the scholar of Issy, the

habitué of the salons of the Marquise de Belle Isle and Madame St. Lo—to whom Sir Andrew spoke as an equal, and who in swift give-and-take bandied the wit of Versailles with Lilias Agnew.

They had not gone far, ere there was that between them which told both how well they pleased one another—something which would soon lead them farther—perhaps even beyond the possibility of ever turning back.

Ten times had Silver Sand been on the verge of confession. He knew which way his duty lay, but still when it came to the point, he shrank affrighted from the fear of losing her—and with her all that made his life worth living. Lilias, it is true, often helped him, quite unconsciously, by some gay light word, which dammed back the heavy weight of his unspoken secret.

She permitted her hand to lie in his—nay, when she took it away to point where the great trout they called "Black Nevin" was wont to sulk under the bank, it slid back of itself without remark on either side. Perhaps she felt the safer under the thunder of these brawling choruses. And he—well, for him the rushy island became his lady's dear bower, and the very cows cropping and wrenching at the grasses in the meadow passed on their way with a new unconscious charm.

"I am glad *you* are not going to Ireland," Lilias said, with a sigh and a very slight emphasis on the pronoun.

"Thank you," said Silver Sand, quietly, "I could not go. If Sir Andrew sets sail, I have promised to look after you in the Castle."

"But you could never fight Earlshall and all his dragoons?"

"Perhaps not," he said, smiling confidently, "the troops I command are not disciplined, but they are admirable for a dashing assault. Better still at hiding away for an ambush, and I shall always have enough of them within call to insure me of being able to carry you and my Lady off in case of need."

"How delightful!" the girl whispered, leaning towards him, "I love mystery and adventure. I think I was born with a turn for it. Aunt Jean likes all things fixed and ranged, so that they can stay that way through all the eternities. A book must not stray, but stand erect upon its shelf, volume three following volume two, and she resents that I cannot always remember to return them to their places. She never reads one herself, dear Aunt Jean, but she has a high sense of their purpose, which is to stand in rows straight and stiff calf-bound and buckramed, like soldiers on parade. I do believe she is a little affronted when anyone takes one of them down to read! She wonders why people should disarrange things so. Well ought to be left alone."

All too quickly the minutes passed without much interchange of speech. The waters plashed softly about their feet, and the wind came in vague, sweet gusts of perfume from this field and that other meadow.

Behind them the seniors talked in whispers, and if Lady Jean wept on her husband's shoulder, it was in the dark, and the next instant she was urging him to take ship for Ireland. James and the young man Silver Sand were right. Every day spent in his own country increased his danger. Claverhouse himself would be back soon, and then (to use Lady Agnew's strong expression) all Wigtonshire would be searched "as a man ripes his pipe!"

"But what will you do, Jean, my poor woman?" said Sir Andrew. "My heart is full of wae to be leaving you."

"Fear na, Andrew," she said, "'tis your life and not mine that is in question. I am only in danger through you, guidman. Otherwise I can hold the Castle—aye, and the hordes that are therein. I was not born a Hay of Park for nothing. Even to Claverhouse I am 'my noble lady,' which I should not be if you were captured and executed. For, mark you, Andrew, that is what

they are determined upon. Nothing else will settle them securely in the Sheriffdom! Gang then, Andrew, if ye love me!"

"I love ye, Jean, and I will gang!"

She lifted her head and gave his cheek a little pat with her open hand.

"Fie, for shame, Sheriff," she said, "you and me to be speakin' about love and such like at our time o' life. But it was your obstinacy that drove me to it. But where in the world are these young folk that slid away so daintily to give us leave to talk?"

"They are yonder at the point of the Isle, looking at the lighted windows of the Castle, and never saying a word one to the other!"

"Then you think——"

"No, I do not, Jean. The young man is all for book-learning, and he will be a clever chiel that gets Lilias Agnew to listen to him. Whiles I think she is fretting about James!"

"How about James?" said his wife.

"Oh, just James no wantin' to marry her, and running all the time after the Montgomerie lassie. I have heard her speaking reproachful words more than once to Jamie, and I could have clouted his lugs to see the poor lass so put upon."

"Oh, Sir Andrew, Sir Andrew, you are a brave and a staunch man, also a good sheriff, but as to reading the heart o' a young lassie, ye are still in the horn-book. Do you not see and hear that she is flouting Jamie, as she is flouting this young man Silver Sand, as she flouts Hal of Windy Standard, as she lightlies all that come near her? If she were hankering after James, would she be telling the world about it? Would she publish her pain? Little fear, she knows that it annoys James to have the thing cast up to him—therefore she casts it up, and for no other reason."

"And in the Castle, when the garrison is within doors, is the hempie any hindrance to you?"

"A help, Sir Andrew, a great help! She has all the elders listening to her stories of the great folk in France, and all the younger are her servants to command, what with her singing and her merry flouting ways. Yet there is no quarrelling, for she never distinguishes one more than another, but treats all alike, and if any officer comes into her presence touched with liquor, she will not speak to him for a week."

"Well, well, Jean Hay, you doubtless ken her best. But maybe lasses have not changed so greatly since one I ken of sat up to watch the lights of Ireland, and thought them bonny over the heaving breast o' the North Channel!"

"Andrew, I have forgotten, if ever I did the like, and besides you cannot say that ever I had a flouting tongue or a butterfly wing, poising here and settling there like our Lilias."

"No, Jean, no—there never was a lass like you—I have said it thirty year, and if I live I shall say it thirty more. But ye ken, 'God made of one blood,' and so forth. That includes Lilias Agnew, mind ye, Jean, and some day her tongue will falter in its flouting, and her butterfly wing become heavy as lead."

"Maybe you are right, Andrew. At any rate ye are right enough for you and me not to differ about it when we have so soon to part. Let us go and find the young folk. We will behave ourselves more seemly before them, and I must not be seen making my way in at the back door of the Castle with my e'en all begrutten. A bonny tale that would be among the wenches and the men-at-arms."

Sir Andrew gripped his wife in his arms.

"Jean—Jean," he said hoarsely.

"I tell you what it is, Andrew," she said severely. "Let me go. I do not want to greet like a bairn, and as

true as my name's Jean Hay, I will not! Let us go, I say!"

She stamped her foot, and extricated herself a little dishevelled from his embrace.

"Did I not tell you, you great bairn!" she chided. "Now come and find the young folk."

Silver Sand and his companion had stood for a period of time which seemed to them relatively short, facing the lighted windows and hearkening to the strains of vinous mirth. The young man was restraining himself, compelling himself to silence amid the ruins of his old life. Yet in spite of himself imagination was whirling him forward, devising new tactics, scheming how to reconcile two things manifestly irreconcilable.

He despised himself that he allowed the hand of Lilias to remain in his, yet he grasped it all the more jealously on that account. She did not know, and he called himself a hound for not telling her. She must know, he acknowledged that, but not yet. . . He dared not risk being sent into the outer darkness with no hope of looking upon her face again. Besides, something whispered within him, he was not taking anything from Juliana. He could not take from her what she had never possessed.

Had he not foretold this day, and yet she had taken him in full knowledge. She had promised that she would not stand in his way. But now when the thing had come to pass and Lilias and he stood hand in hand, in what was more than a promise—almost, indeed, a dedication—would Juliana keep her word. He felt she could not. It was more than any man could expect from a woman.

Silver Sand, deep in his reverie, had not noticed the end of the conversation between husband and wife. Yet when Lady Agnew came up behind them, Lilias, a full yard away, was pointing out the reflection of the lighted windows upon the waters. Yet ere she turned

to go, she secretly broke a little sprig from the bush of alder under shade of which they two had joined hands.

Something youthful and triumphant sang clear as a clarion in her spirit.

"I have found him—he is mine!" was the burden of that jubilant chant.

And so it ought to have been—only the lords of life are jealous of a too quickly won joy. They love not easy triumphs. Weeping must endure for a season, even though joy comes in the morning.

"Bairn, the time grows late!" said Lady Jean, "do you Silver Sand, see that Sir Andrew comes by no harm. God keep you, Andrew. No, do not touch me!"

XVIII

THE COOLING OF THE FIERY FURNACE

SIR ANDREW AGNEW was duly set ashore on the strands of Larne Lough, and with his departure the household of Lochnaw settled back into a peace to which it had long been a stranger. The hated Claverhouse had come and gone. The search for Sir Andrew had been so keen that James and Silver Sand had been obliged to dismantle the refuge of the Gled's Nest not a day too soon, and store the beams and planks in a cave on the face of the ravine called Gash Gibbie. Then they went still lower down and took shelter with Mr. Walter Dunning in the Doocot Cave, the safest of all hiding-places on that wild shore.

They could get no news from Lochnaw except through Mirren McNoah, and she could not always find access to the interior of the house. Claverhouse had treated Lady Agnew with some austerity, but at the same time had warned Earlshall against permitting any roistering in the Castle. While at Lochnaw he had gone out each day to see that the search for the missing Sheriff and his son was zealously carried out.

In spite of all attempts no trace of either could be found, and Claverhouse threatened to send Earlshall home in disgrace. Earlshall replied with truth that no man could have done more or better, but that he had been obliged to depend upon his own men, strangers and ignorant, for information. The whole neighbourhood was devoted to the Agnews, and a spy would not live a day in such a country. Such an one might expect to follow Ellerton and Kidney over the cliff, before ever he

got his first message to headquarters—which was all most true, but had (as perhaps Earlshall intended) the gift of rendering Claverhouse quite savage.

"You do not deserve to wear His Majesty's uniform," he told Earlshall, "and if I have any credit with the Honourable Privy Council, you shall not much longer hold his commission."

"I do not wear the Privy Council's livery," said Earlshall, "and before I am stripped of the King's, there are those about His Majesty's person who will have a word to say."

"You lose two soldiers and find their bodies thrust through with wounds. You are content to sit still under the insult, though it has been committed upon the lands of the Hereditary Sheriff. He walks in and out as if still Lord of the Heritage, while you and that tipsy fool Windram bow low before him and give him an escort and safe conduct to and from his Justice Aires."

"We obeyed our instructions, Colonel Graham, and prosecuted the search as best we could, considering the intractable nature of the people hereabouts. Moreover you yourself have directed the parties for three days, and I do not see that, so far as results go, you have any great advantage over us."

"Get to your quarters, sir," thundered Claverhouse, "give up your sword. I put you under arrest."

Earlshall, who was somewhat mounted with his potations, undid the clasp of his sword belt and let the whole fall upon the chill blue flags of the hall with a resounding clatter. Then he saluted after the foreign fashion (for he had served in King Louis's household troops, as Claverhouse had done with William of Orange) and finally, clicking his heels together, he swaggered off to his quarters with defiance in every twirl of his moustachios.

John Graham could have killed him, so angry was he. It was the first breath of the coming change which now

blew chill upon him. The King did not show his former eagerness to push matters to an extreme. In fact, he had secretly become a Catholic, and had already begun to feel that he could not afford to coerce and slay for nonconformity when he was a nonconformist himself.

Besides, the Duke of York, though he had enjoyed seeing the torture of the boot and the thumbscrews in Edinburgh as he might sit out a performance in a theatre, was an open and averred Papist. He, more than anyone, had at this time the King's ear, and he was for ever representing the case of his persecuted fellow religionists.

"There must be a General Toleration," he kept repeating, "to grant it in Scotland first will have a good effect. Then we can with some show of generosity extend it to the dissenters of England, and so include the Catholics as well."

"I am sure I let off all those whose names are brought before me," said Charles dismally, "I want only peace in my time—peace and a little gentle society. By the way, did I tell you what Nelly said to Rochester last night?"

"Never mind her just now," York persisted, "put a rein on that wildbull of Bashan, John Graham. Bid him to stop shooting and setting the people by the ears. They are loyal enough, as I could very well see when I was in Edinburgh. They only require to be let alone. But the Grahams and their pack keep them all the time on the run, worrying and chasing them from one place to another like ill-set strange collies among sheep."

The news of this change in high places gradually filtered down, and though naturally the Grahams and the lairds of Lag and Westerhall were the last to hear of it, those who had no expectation of forfeited estates looked at the business a little differently.

This was Captain Bruce's position, and explains a good deal of the mildness with which Wigtonshire was being treated in comparison with the terrors and exactions

which were still being launched against the Eastern half of Galloway.

"I wish," the King had said laughingly, "that they would let me pit one half of the kingdom of Scotland against the other as they did at the Red Harlow. If the Highlanders lose, they shall learn the Westminster Catechism as they made me do at Scone before they would crown me. If they win, then the Lowlands shall be obliged to sit quietly under law-abiding prelates. They are all for ever pestering me about their ministers. These are ignorant—others rebellious! Jack wants rid of the one set, Jill of t'other. I do not see why they cannot do without them altogether. They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them! There, brother, is a quotation which you with all your Jesuits cannot cap!"

Claverhouse, with great discomfort in his mind, returned to Dumfries. He had restored Earlshall to his command, having on the whole no officer so distinguished as the fighter of Ayr's Moss. But though he drove ever the harder, the despatches which he received from the Privy Council were not satisfactory. He appeared to have lost the royal ear, and the Duke of York never answered his reports and demands for reinforcements. It is doubtful even if he ever read them.

"A set of political trimmers," he cried, "they are waiting for the weather to change so that they may set their sails accordingly—I would to God I had them here. I should trim them to some purpose. They should get the shelter of a dykeback while the firing party was loading. At least, even though the King himself does, John Graham of Claverhouse will never turn."

He spoke the truth—and it was his only merit—at least the only one which his cruel rages in Galloway will let us see at this day and date.

* * * * *

At his final departing—but some hours afterwards—there was a bonfire made in the market-place of Stran-

raer, and Captain Windrum had to send a sufficient force to put it out. But the 'prentice lads only lit it in another place, and sat round drinking to the King's health and confusion to the Privy Council. This it was difficult to find fault with, for it was a toast that was nightly drunk at the officers' mess with a foot upon the table and three times three.

XIX

JULIUS AND JULIANA

THE necessity which now presented itself to Silver Sand's mind was a visit to the Dungeon of Buchan, or if that proved impossible in his present state of mind, he must at least have more direct news of Juliana and the party he had left behind him there.

Silver Sand was indeed in a most difficult case. He had not the courage to lay the whole affair before Lilias, who, he felt sure, would instantly have sent him about his business. Nor had he the heart to leave the new life which had opened for him, and return to be hurt by the loving smiles and simple adorations which he knew were waiting for him up among the Dungeon fastnesses.

A man of less heart would not have suffered at all. He would merely have kept two good things in water-tight compartments, enjoyed them both to the utmost, and trusted to luck not to be found out. But though there was little enough of the orthodox Christian about Silver Sand, and though he rather kept the peculiar law which had been given to his people, yet his heart was green and tender within him, and in a manner of speaking he had cast in his lot with the Saints—lonely saints, like Walter Dunning in his rock oratory; restless prophesying saints like Peden; pensive, foredoomed saints like young James Renwick, even then getting ready for a belated martyrdom.

But it became necessary to take a part, and all might have ended with Silver Sand going with his tale to Lilias, but that something happened which he had not been

counting upon, and which in a moment brought to an end all his projects and resolves.

One day Silver Sand ascended the little iron ladder which led up from the Doocot Cave. The morning was just coming over the short clipping wavelets of the Solway. The chillish wind which runs before the sun was fretting them and sending them seaward, windcapt and angry. But overhead to the east spread a canopy of pale green and rose pink, still, ambient, and, like Heaven's gate in the Revelation, "one pearl."

At the ladder's top Silver Sand came out on the new and beautiful world of turf, gorse, and broom and the tender purple of the dwarf marsh-mallow which grew abundantly in every hollow.

But he found something awaiting him infinitely more astonishing than these daily marvels which met his eye. A young man stood before him, black against the coming light. He was dressed in a well-fitting suit of dark material. A cloak was thrown loosely about his shoulders, and on his head was a broad bonnet with a feather in it, like that which James Agnew wore. Something in the blithesome carriage of the head set off the young and handsome figure, and showed as if by intention, that this was no city dandy or young squireen aping his betters. A sword hung at his side in an accustomed and workmanlike fashion and it seemed to Silver Sand that he could just make out the hilts of a pair of pistols. He sprang instantly to his feet, his own sword leaping to his hand that he might not be taken by surprise.

But before he could utter a word or even put himself into a posture of defence, two arms were held towards him and a voice that he at once loved and feared to hear said softly, "*Do you not know me—Juliana!*"

What could he do except fold her in his arms? After all, she had first claim upon him. He thought with a sort of wistful self-pitying agony of Lilias, but it was clear to him that the presence of Juliana there on the cliffs

of the black shore of Leswalt, within sight of the towers of Lochnaw, put an end to all else.

"I could not wait longer," she whispered pleadingly, "I had this suit made by Tailor Byron in the street of Stranraer. Do not be angry, I shall help and not hinder you, being now a young man. No one need know, and except my father and the Killer no one does know. The clan thinks I have gone to England to gather in your dues, which is, indeed, where I ought to be!"

Silver Sand could not immediately adjust himself to the new circumstances, but all the same he was conscious that the unexpected appearance of Juliana rather simplified matters than otherwise. At least he should have no more lies to act.

"You are not angry, John Faa?" she asked anxiously, and when he had reassured her, she added, "I knew you were in hiding, and therefore in danger. For you had sent word for the Killer and half a dozen of those who best knew the countryside to join you. I came with them and now I shall share your troubles with you! I am glad. And how much money do you think I have brought? Guess—it is all here safe in my belt. Oh, I have thought so much of giving into your own hands the dues of Egypt which I have collected for you."

The light had now come clearer and Silver Sand could see Juliana in her short skirted coat, well padded out to conceal her girlish figure.

"Juliana," he said, "I declare you are a devilish handsome lad. If there are any women in these parts with hearts to break, you are the fellow for the business!"

"I care neither for man nor woman," said Juliana, with her eyes on him, "no, nor ever did—except for you alone!"

It was all going to be harder than he had anticipated because he knew that she spoke the truth.

"But your hair," he queried, to keep her off the diffi-

culties as long as possible, "you have never cut your beautiful hair?"

"Indeed I have," she laughed, "but there is quite enough left and I was careful about the curls on my neck that you used to like. I can wear it long to my shoulders, for that is the fashion. I sold the rest in Dumfries to a trader—a Jew man with such oily eyes, and by this time it is well on its way to London Town to deck the head of some shrivelled old court dame, who has more need of it than I! Guess how much I got for it—and, oh, John Faa, you have never guessed how much money I have brought you to play the fine gentleman with. It will be splendid to stand behind your chair and see you risk your pieces with the cocks of the dice-box!"

Silver Sand laughed at Juliana's innocent ideas of his occupations. Yet he wished he had indeed had no more to reproach himself with, and that the scattering of guineas was the worst he could lay to his charge.

"Well, Juliana," he said to pleasure her, "have you brought your spendthrift a hundred pounds? That is a good round sum and one which I should have taken long to get paid in my ragged regiments."

"Two hundred and fifty," cried the girl triumphantly. "I have taken in arrears from all the clans—even from the Faas of Yester and Yetholm, who have hitherto counted themselves exempt, they are so proud. I had to use your authority pretty freely to get it. But they will respect you the more."

"Juliana, you are a marvel!"

"Julius, if you please—Juliana is no name for a well grown young man with the makings of a moustache. See—it is quite visible if you look long enough."

And Master Julius Stanley smoothed and caressed, twirled and pointed an imaginary moustache.

"Well then, Master Julius," said Silver Sand, resolving to take the plunge, "I have business at the Castle yonder. I am Sir Andrew's agent while he is hiding

in Ireland, and down there is a garrison of soldiers, and two women to keep them in good humour—my Lady Agnew and Mistress Lilias, Sir Andrew's niece, the daughter of his brother. Come down with me. I have money to pay over to them—what I can scrape from the tenants; though, with the dragoons driving their cattle and stealing their hay and corn, it is but little that the poor folk can give."

"So you help them out of your own pocket, John?"

"How can I do otherwise, Juliana—I mean Julius (I must practise that name or I shall forget myself!). I do not spend more than a few shillings upon myself, and in the time of my need and yours it was Sir Andrew who helped us—nay, who put his neck into the halter for you and me!"

"That grave wise old judge before whom we were dragged out of that foul thieves' hole in Wigtown burgh?"

"The same," said Silver Sand, "he is now blamed for letting you go, and if he is caught, he will go to the gallows for it, as your father and you were then in danger of doing—if he had not listened to me, and for my sake let you go."

"Oh, I am sorry—so sorry. He was a kind man," said Juliana, leaning against one of the red tasselled larches the sheriff had planted, "but all the same it was to you alone we owed our deliverance."

Silver Sand shook his head gravely. He had his reasons for wishing Juliana to be conscious what he and she owed to the family at Lochnaw.

They went down through the woods and out upon the wind-driven slopes where the very grass looks tired with the ceaseless thresh of the west wind. All the way the Chief of the Faas instructed his secretary-page, Julius, upon his behaviour, and the manner he must assume. He must speak as little as possible, but when anything was to be made a note of, at a turn of the master's hand,

he must be ready to write it in a book. And Silver Sand gave him his own pocket-book with the portable writing tablets and a taxgatherer's inkhorn swinging to a silver tasche. Thus instructed and so equipped they made their way down to the Holm Wood, where Silver Sand expected that Lilias would be waiting for him.

"Remember," he said, "salute the lady with a low bow and your bonnet off. She comes for the money to furnish food for the troops. I have to tell her that it is sent by Sir Andrew, or she would not take it."

"So that is where the money goes which I gathered for you with much pains," she said with something of curtness in her tone.

"Oh," said Silver Sand, with an ease he was far from feeling, "Sir Andrew's debt to me makes sure and good interest. He will pay me back with usury when the wind changes and he comes to his own again—and if what I saw in the Clear Vision be true (and it is true), that time is not far off."

"You have had a warning—the Second Sight?"

"It is given to those of my house to foretell events, though none can see into his own future. But we of the Faas prefer to call it the Clear Vision."

"And what did you see, John? Tell me."

"I saw the King lie a-dying, and better times coming for us all."

"Yet they say he is a kindly man, this King, and not cruel save that he takes no heed of State's business, so that evil and bitter wrong are wrought unchecked in his name."

"All the same it is wrought—that evil, and he is guilty because he does not prevent it."

It was not long before they came down to the level of the cultivated fields and fenced woods which ring about Lochnaw, and at the sight of the dusky shadows of the Holm Wood, the heart of Silver Sand began to beat thick and fast within his bosom.

Juliana prattled on, careless of whom they were going to meet. She was with Silver Sand and therefore nothing could happen amiss. She certainly acted her part to a marvel. The stride was easy yet not exaggerated. She had a slightly swinging gait, at once boyish and impertinent, which went very well with the character of a page. She spoke well and occasionally aired a few words of French, which, though not of the quality of Madame de Belle Isle's or the speech of Lilias, were forceful and idiomatic, such as one might expect from a boy who when he could had played truant from his grammar lessons. Altogether Silver Sand was satisfied that Lilias would suspect nothing. The difficulty lay all the other way. What might not Julius suspect?

Silver Sand had not too much time to dwell upon the question, for they had only to pass along the daisy-starred edges of a field of green which already had the satin sheer of growing oats upon it. They could hear the miller down at the mill ("in the clough-bottom" as Juliana said) beating out the oatmeal for the porridge of the dragoons in a swimming haze of dust and clatter, while the water lashing into the pool spread abroad a grateful coolness, and the *lap-lap-lap* of the wheel fell cadenced upon the ear.

Through sunlit dusky spaces where motes danced and wheels spun, they could spy the miller within though he could not see them. He was checking figures in a book, while a couple of troopers with a harnessed "trail-cart" —the body fitted on ash-branches—stood ready to receive and acknowledge the week's supply for dinner and supper.

"All the corn has now to be bought," said Silver Sand, "bought in Ireland and paid for before delivery. Perhaps, Juliana, it is just as well that you are such a rich woman, or our friends to whom we are so deeply indebted might chance to see the roof burned over their heads."

"I had thought of you spending it gallantly among gay gentlemen," said Juliana, wistfully.

"Thank you, Julius, my dear page," said Silver Sand, "but I have no mind to fling your hardly gained gold pieces through the window——"

"Nay, but they are yours!"

"Well then, mine be it, Julius. All the same it would be no pleasure to me to live raffishly, to sport and drink and dice, to play ombre and tric-trac till my gear was all spent. If I could buy some few score of good books with it now, and find some place in which to store them—*that* I should not mind at all. But as it is I can do no better than lend my guineas to Sir Andrew and so help him to keep the ancient foundations of the Agnew's from being ploughed up and sown with salt."

XX

MASTER ALL-TOO-PRETTY

THEY had left behind them the hill pines, sighing and creaking in the sea wall. Lower down they came upon the little dells and watercourses sprayed and spotted with birches, alternate light and shadow like spangles or tinsel on a jester's coat.

Juliana moved beside her husband—lightsomely, harbouring no thought in her heart save that she was again with him and that he was not angry. That Silver Sand should receive her ill, and that he should drive her from him, had appeared to her likely and not unjust. Gipsy husbands often punish disobedience severely and hers had been flagrant.

She meant in that case to make the money an excuse, to deliver it and then to return.

But the affair had turned out otherwise. She was not sure but that she would have liked it better if he had been rude with her and sent her about her business, as her father or any ordinary son of Egypt would have done. Then she would have been certain of making it all up at their next camping place. But Silver Sand received her as an equal, almost as one to whom—such a thing was never heard of in Romany land—apologies were due. He called her in to help him with his business among the Gorgios. That was natural enough, but that he had neither been angry nor yet had punished her, these things were not to be explained.

She remembered the gipsy proverb, "I have not a bruise on me from head to foot—my man loves me not."

Yet she remembered his long sojourn among the

stranger folk across the sea. They did not treat their women so—perhaps he had forgotten. Also she recalled his gentle nature, which prevented him from giving pain to any—except, alas (and unwittingly to himself) the heart-pain which cannot be healed.

They set foot on the Holm Wood of Lochnaw. The little stile came first. Silver Sand had made it for Lilias, and Juliana's feet bounded across hardly touching the projecting flat stones on either side.

Lilias Agnew was there before them. She had been marching up and down wondering what kept the punctual Silver Sand so long behind his time. She saw the young man with him and thought she understood. This was a messenger from Sir Andrew in Ireland and had brought the money my Lady was in such great need of, to feed her army of hungry pensioners.

But why bring him there—when she would so much rather that Silver Sand had come alone? They had not long to speak together but now this stranger would spoil the few minutes she had looked forward to, more than all the others which made up the day. But Lilias could not sulk long. The thing was not in her nature. Besides, the lad was so handsome and so well dressed. He must be one of the younger Ballikill Agnews, though she tried in vain to remember any who could have turned out into this pretty fellow.

A moment more and he was bowing before her, bowing and reddening very properly—this was no court-bred youth, to blush like that.

She looked at him attentively. There was none of the roughness of a Scots bred youth about the lad, but then neither was there about Silver Sand—"French trained (she thought) and perhaps some cousin of Madame St. Lo."

"What is your name, sir?" she asked after her hand had been kissed by both her visitors.

"Julius Stanley, an' it please your ladyship!"

"Come," she laughed, "do not be over polite. Silver Sand is not exactly a pale shrinking violet for whom you have to search under the hedge. Take an example by him if you wish to succeed with ladies."

"I have never known him anything but gentle," said Juliana in her throaty contralto.

"Save us," cried Lilias, "you should have seen him putting down Hal Bruce of Windy Standard when he gave offence by his noisy drunkenness. The lad has never offended again. But I daresay you have been too well brought up by the good fathers ever to make a beast of yourself by such excess!"

The young lad looked at Silver Sand as if for guidance, and he struck in rather hastily taking the burden of the explanation upon himself.

"This young man, Julius Stanley, is of my blood, and comes from England. He speaks some little French as a proper young man ought, though hardly the brand which would please your cousins of Belle Isle and St. Lo. I have been charged with him by his father, as he serves me in the quality of secretary-page."

Lilias laughed heartily.

"Hearken to the Frenchman," she said, "he is outlawed and goes with a price upon his head, but he must have his—what did you call it—his secretary-page! Wait, lad, till I can tell my uncle. You shall never hear the end of it."

Silver Sand smiled without showing annoyance. He looked down at her gravely and indulgently, so that the girl's laughter died away. It did not sound very convincing in any case.

"If I were a knight, I should call the young man my squire. But as it is I am only a poor gipsy and a merchant of scythe-sand. He keeps my accounts very well."

Lilias showed all her pretty teeth, and laid her hand on the shoulder of the secretary-page.

"He looks better fitted for my lady's chamber than to

be a carrier of granite sand for lowland 'strakes'," Lilias declared. "Then he is too good looking by far. If he came to Lochnaw we should have all the toasts of the county pulling caps for him. And yet I warrant he twirls his moustache as if he were the very devil of a fellow."

"I saw him last loading a pair of very awkward donkeys and leading them through one of the most difficult tracks in the country. He seemed not unhappy. Pray do not spoil him, Mistress Lilias, with your praises, and let us get to business. I have received a hundred gold pieces to send to your aunt, my Lady Agnew, on her husband's account."

"Now that is very strange," said the girl, putting her forefinger meditatively to her chin, "for Lady Agnew has just had a letter from her husband Sir Andrew. It came by an honest seaman out of Loch Larne, and he walked over from Chapel harbour with it."

"And what said Sir Andrew?"

"He said that God knew (but *he* did not) where you got the money to give to my Lady. For his purse was as light as a blown bladder and Cousin Pat, though rich in whisky, oatmeal and potatoes, kept declaring that he had not one crown piece to rub against another! That is what your friend Sir Andrew wrote. Now, what do you, Master Percy of Northumberland, find to say to that?"

"The tenants of the estate——" Silver Sand murmured, completely put out of countenance. "You must understand I am Sir Andrew's agent, Mistress Lilias. I have ventured to uplift—on my own authority——"

"Do not trouble yourself to invent more lies, Silver Sand—at least not to me. They do not become your style of conversation. Worse still, you do it very poorly. But there at your elbow stands the lad who could make women believe him—aye, though he were to tell them that twice two make five."

Julius Stanley met the frank smile of Lilias.

"He does not make a good dissembler, Mr. All-too-Pretty-Secretary, that excellent master of yours. We must teach him better. We have the good sense to know how to time and season our lives, you and I. Now I have taken a liking to you and if you come to Lochnaw there are some pinch-waisted young gentlemen who will do you the honour to be very jealous of you indeed. But if you and I are friends, as I feel certain we shall be, you must take the bitter with the sweet."

"I would gladly come, Lady Lilias," said the page-secretary, "for never have I seen any one half so beautiful as you are—nor one who speaks so pleasantly and lightsomely. Were I a gentleman—I mean one of your degree, I would gladly follow you to the world's end."

"There's for you, Silver Sand—your first lesson! That is the way to talk to a woman, and mark if you please the baby curls clustering about his lace collarette. Fegs, he can teach you the lilt of it, Master Percy. Why, you are all buckram and hide to this secretary of yours, so when you go a-courting let him first tell you what to say!"

"Nay, but I mean it," cried the young secretary, impetuously, "suffer me to speak: I am not, as you suppose expert in such matters, but you have only to shake your locks to tangle a man's heart therein——"

There came a kind of sob into Juliana's throat, but she concluded gaily enough, out of a poetry-book Silver Sand had left behind him at the Dungeon:

"And who that sees them can forget
The roses on your fresh lip blown."

"Does the little fool fancy himself in love with me?" thought Lilias, "if so I must be careful. But no—it is impossible. He is speaking to impress his master and no doubt has gotten his lesson by heart."

Mistress Lilias was quite conscious that pretty boys

were made to be played with, but like all women still young she reserved her serious thoughts for men of figure and parts. Silver Sand broke in again:

"I have here a hundred pounds for which I shall hereafter account to Sir Andrew when he comes across the water—also ten for James, which I shall keep till I see him. Count them over and sign this receipt, if it please you, Mistress Lilias."

"Willingly, good agent," said the girl, "and I shall write to my uncle that he is a far richer man than he knows of. The farmers undo their purses. The cottagers take down a stone in the chimney, and lo! there is a gold Charles or two behind it. Spanish dollars, French crowns, and thin rose nobles from the land of the Percys grow plenty as gooseberries. However, it is not my business. All I have to do is to carry the gold to her ladyship, who uses it without question, as if Sir Andrew himself dropped it piece by piece into her hand. But you and I, Sir Secretary, are wiser. We know—and you better than I, from what store these most needful guineas of African gold have come so kindly to hand, and how in so dark a time they see the light that the Agnew acres may be kept together."

The secretary could not take his eyes off Lilias as she spoke, and Silver Sand was on the rack all the while. That there was more than admiration in that look, of that he was convinced; and he began to regret deeply that he had brought these two together. But the thing was done now and must be made the best of. He therefore hurried his task and paid over the hundred guineas against a receipt which Lilias signed, hoping that then she might go her way and leave him to find out what lay behind the strange liquid light in the black eyes of Juliana. Whatever it was, he would be glad to get it over.

But whether she hoped again to hear her beauty praised, or because she had taken a genuine liking to

his secretary, Mistress Lilias seemed in no such hurry to take herself off.

As if to provoke him, she laid her hand and arm upon Juliana's shoulder.

"Why do you glower, and look at us so sour and uncouth?" she asked him. "Can you fault or quarrel with me that youth takes to youth? Remember if there be offence, the offence is mine. Do not make this paragon suffer long amends for a short fault—and that fault none of his. If I love him, what is that to you, John Faa? If I own it, that is my business, and from the blush on his cheek, I see that he finds it quite natural. You are a great man, my lord Earl. You may even be a king, but by my troth, like the folk in the bailard, there is more of Brown Robin about you than of Sweet William!"

XXI

THE SULKS OF SILVER SAND

NOTHING must serve Lilias Agnew but that she must take her new friend with her to Lochnaw.

"I would give a five guinea Charles large as my palm to see Hal Bruce's face as the two of us come in at the door and go linking arm in arm up the stair to my Aunt Jean's chamber!"

Silver Sand made an obvious objection.

"No," she said, "there will be no danger and no fighting. Earlshall is off with Windram scouring the northerly moors. They think my uncle and James have broke away in that direction. They quarter to-night at Girvan and we at Lochnaw shall be rid of them till late to-morrow night. There is only Hal of Windy Standard, who is as good as no one, and a few saddle-galled troopers whom the servants ply with liquor whenever they are awake—which is not often. Let Master Stanley come with me to see Aunt, and to keep me company for an hour or two in the dullness of that ancient house. You have no idea how dull it is—that great mansion—with so many men to whom you must not speak—only acknowledge their salutations—all, that is, except madcap Hal Bruce. Nevertheless if you will lend me your secretary, we shall soon have them all by the ears."

"Very likely, Mistress Lilias, but it seems to me that you had better keep the peace you have, than rob me of my secretary to be a sword of strife among that lawless crew."

Lilias turned to the young man with a smile which would have corrupted an archangel, but which was somewhat wasted upon Juliana, even in her bravery of masculine attire.

"I will do even as my chief bids," said the secretary. "But——" she added after a little hesitation, "if it is only that he fears for me, I can take care of myself."

"Nay," said Silver Sand, "you may go if you like, but I will have no duelling. As to that, Mistress Lilias must pledge her word—otherwise you shall not stir a step!"

"I do pledge it," said Lilias Agnew, promptly, "and now come thy ways. Leave Sobersides to his accountings. He must manage them for once by himself, and you shall take me in with lovelocks flying like the gallantest cavalier. Lord, it will be nutmeg and cinnamon sprinkled upon shortcake to see Hal Bruce! He will take it like a furious Gascon and I shall tame him like a white lamb of Cheviot. We shall speak French before him, which he does not understand except my Aunt should be there, which would be rude. I shall throw you all my love-letters and if there are any that please you, you can take copies, for I warrant you they have tried all styles, *mes chers amoureux*."

"Go with Mistress Lilias to see my Lady," said Silver Sand, resigning himself. "Forget nothing I said to you, and come back to-night. I shall wait for you at ten of the clock on Nevin's Isle, which is a nearer and a safer night rendezvous than these woods."

Juliana avoided his eyes as they parted, but her cheek was flushed even to the soft warm brown of her neck on which the little unclipped ringlets lay light as sea foam. For some reason or another she wanted much to go, or else she would never have consented to part so quickly with John Faa whom she had come so far to seek.

Silver Sand stood and looked after these two as they went across the meadows. He heard the echoes of

clownish mirth come from the outhouses, and he knew that both Lilias and Juliana were in some danger to themselves, though the headstrong nature of the Sheriff's niece would not permit her to own it.

"A year ago I thought no more of women than of elephants. Now I have a pair of them on my hands, and find them about as easy to handle. What a fool I was to bring them together! One woman may obey and be led, so long as you deal with her apart, but a pair of them—the devil himself, though a bachelor, could not drive them!"

The voices about the castle rose louder. Invitations to some one or another to show himself a good fellow—to *"drink a pot and dowse it down,"* made Silver Sand shudder and curse himself for a fool.

Into what danger might not these two heedless young things be running themselves? He went up to the head of the wood and sent a smoke message to Killer Smith and his men to come to him directly. The Castle must be watched till Juliana came out.

What was more, he himself must stay there to watch Killer Smith. It would not do to taint Castle Lochnaw with such a solution of the difficulty as might readily occur to the Killer if left to the freedom of his own will —a little active dagger practice and then the garrison sunk in the loch! The Killer was a dangerous enemy, but for a quiet man, a still more dangerous ally.

So Silver Sand abode all day hungry, among the rich and various flowers which proclaimed the ecstacy of that high summer. The Killer and his men brought each a crust and a "whang" of skim-milk cheese, but though they offered a share to Silver Sand, he saw that they had not brought more than enough for themselves. He could fast better than they, so he sat and gloomily watched the Castle through the tall boles of the trees and the tangle of underbrush.

The Killer crouched beside him, half asleep, and only

full and eagerly awake when one of his two spies came in to report. One, Jabez McKitterick, had gone right up to the back door and begged a "piece." This he had received and disposed of on the spot (to prove his good faith)—a huge buttermilk scone and all the meat which remained on a soup bone out of the broth pot. His Majesty's brave drunkards were now lying snoring among the straw in the barn, so overcome that when they wanted anything they had to crawl towards it upon their knees.

The second, called Viper McKitterick, a little wormy youth as lithe as a weasel in a dyke, had gone right up to the window of the hall and had seen an officer in the King's uniform talking with another slender young man in fine clothes, while a lady sat and knitted listening to them.

"Was the lady old or young?" Silver Sand demanded.

"Young—quite young, a very proper looking madame."

The answer came with a readiness which convinced Silver Sand that the Viper had given the best part of his attention to the knitting lady. So there was no doubt about it. In spite of her promise, Mistress Lilias was again at her tricks.

He got up and paced to and fro, cursing himself for all the dolts that ever ran their heads into a hanging noose. What would Juliana make of all that, and how would she come out? These were the questions which troubled him—as indeed, considering all the circumstances, they might well. If only he had told Lilias in time as he had promised himself to do! If only he had not been such a fool as to bring them together. If only—if only—all the way through a dozen more rearrangements of the past. If only he had to do it all over again, how different it would be! The sentiment is as old as Adam, when, camped on the outside of the Eden Wall and lit by the flicker of the whirling Sword of Fire, he reconsidered his

position, and as usual, ended by throwing the blame upon his wife.

Towards evening, as he was growing more and more nervous and anxious, a lightfoot girl, in the dusk of whose face he made out the freckled and weather-tanned features of Mirren McNoah, brought him a note.

"It was all twisted billycocked like that when I got it, so don't go blaming me!" explained Mirren. "That? —oh, that's only some cherry-tree gum which I carry to make a taste in my mouth. But I can lick it off easy—see!"

The tongue of the messenger licked the "billycocked" letter like a lambent flame. She dried the place with a casual sweep of her elbow and a dab of her pinafore. Then she presented it to Silver Sand.

"For you—from my lady Lilias," she precised. "I was to give it into none but your own hands. There I've done it—I did not trouble to open it for I kenned what it was aboot. The lad Stanley is biding on at the Castle!"

It was even as Mirren McNoah had stated, but the letter, being in its way unique (like the circumstances), had better be reproduced in this place.

"Great Lord of Little Egypt (it began),—I know you will want to slay me and make black puddings of my heart's blood when you hear that I am going to keep your page-secretary, and that I really do not know when I shall be able to spare him to return him to you. He is quite thrown away among your damp caverns and sticky moss-hags. Besides being much more in place keeping *me* company! As to my Lady he has taken her heart by storm already, and it really will not do to advise Sir Andrew of her foolish fondness for Master Julius Stanley.

"But (for your comfort) I do expect that I shall be

able to keep him out of mischief by attaching him more closely to my own person. And oh, Silver Faa—John Percy—Scythe Sand, and so forth, I kiss your earl's belt and am ever your humble and obedient servant to command,

"LILIAS."

"And now will some one kindly tell me what the minx means by that?" said Silver Sand furiously, as he gave the word to the Killer and his men to follow him up to the reconstructed Gled's Nest, where he expected to meet with James Agnew.

"And Juliana?" he meditated angrily, "she has never disobeyed me before. What is she doing in the castle with that rattlepate of a girl? They are mocking me most likely."

But as he went towards the upper cave which was now entered from a precipitous fissure in the face of the sea-cliff, he saw beneath him the stretch of sward and shingle called Nevin's Isle, where on a certain night not so long ago, he had stood so long and let a small warm hand nestle into his. No, he denied it to himself. He had never wooed Lilias. He had never wooed any woman —not Juliana herself for that matter—yet for all that they came and tangled themselves up with a life which had always been easy, simple, above board, and fancy free!

Silver Sand crushed the little billeycocked missive in his hand, but he let it remain, crumpled as it was, in his pocket.

He was angry because he could not understand. The Oriental idea of womenkind was still in his blood—also the remembrance of faith sworn. So with the natural cross-grainedness of man he solved the question by ciding that though he might forgive Lilias (who was an ignorant outlander) he never could forgive Juliana, who really knew how John Faa ought to be treated. In

fact, for the first and last time in this history Silver Sand fell into a fit of sulks and needed for his cure just what I, Nathan Crogo, give to naughty boys who show themselves at my school troubled with the same complaint.

XXII

THE SECOND ASKING OF JULIANA

I HAVE hitherto said little about myself, and with reason. For he who is the true author of this book has mostly been permitted to speak and shall be again. But, seeing that on the first page, I revindicated the responsibility for everything that appears betwixt cover and cover, it is meet that I should inform the world concerning myself—at least in so far that the reader may know in whom he is trusting.

I set it not down to praise myself up, living the life of a recluse and having no need of testimonials, but I may say—nay, it behooves me to put on record, that one who has had so long the confidence of Sir Andrew Agnew and his son James, a session clerk for nigh upon forty years, is, and must be, a man well kenned for sobriety and discretion.

I was not, and I am not now, any party man, and I admit that many look "cross their noses" at me because I took whatever Tests, Oaths, Affirmations, and such like just as they were demanded of me. What a man of official trust is compelled to do by "the major force" is not his doing, but the King's. I could not have brought up the bairns of Leswalt and Port Patrick unless I had been supple with my tongue and pen. I could not have continued session clerk under Bishop Sydserf and saved many score of honest folk from persecution. I could not have clerked at the courts both military and civil, made out warrants, and then sent on warnings ahead so that

when they arrived, the dragoons might find a toom nest and a bird flown, if I had not done as the great apostle of the Gentiles bade, and made myself all things to all men.

In all this I acted wisely and prudently, not only for myself (which mattered little) but above all, for my neighbours.

For one thing I could go about at all hours, and so saved many a man from facing a firing party. I had only to give a cry in to the curate at the manse on some pretext of a theological difficulty to be solved, or a book to be lent or returned. There I got my information, and so, a little later, did the threatened family.

Furthermore, I was friends with the lads on the muirs who made the potheen, the secret of which had been brought back as a precious gift by the godly exiles who had been sent to Ireland—as indeed was only just, for these good men, expelled from their parishes in the black year 1662, spent a great part of their lives preaching and praying in Ireland, without fee or reward, save and except the knowledge of how to make the potheen.

So as I say I knew the bulk of these free distillers of the hills and northern moors as far as Pinwherry and the Gairland. Also I made it my business to stand well with the revenue men whom King Charles of unhappy memory sent among us. (They were mostly called "Plunder Jacks," "Bore-a-Hole Jenkins," and other more opprobrious names, and were generally much despised by the people.) Indeed they were glad enough to talk to one like myself, who made them free of my larder and my pleasant conversation. So I not only got early notice of their intended seizures, but was kept well supplied with cognac and French wines taken from the smugglers. So I was enabled to do without danger to myself a great many good turns to vast numbers of poor folk who would otherwise have been despoiled, not only of the fruits of their labours, but of the little drop of comfort

which, with a squeeze of lemon, sent them cantily and soberly to their beds; at peace with their neighbours and, I hope, with their Maker.

These would fain have filled my cellar with casks of the good moor-brewed spirits. But first of all I liked not to take from my friends and neighbours. Secondly, the preventive men might have found it there and asked questions—while thirdly, and most particularly, I have never been able to drink even a single quaich (or double-handled horn) of the country spirit called whisky, because it gives me the heartburn with other matutinal disconveniences.

For these reasons I declined all rewards of that sort, and was well thought of on that account throughout the countryside.

Of my learning it does not befit me to speak, but this I will say, that the lads from my school of Leswalt have taken the road by scores to the University of Glasgow, and many of them are now lawyers and doctors and learned theologians. Besides there are Captains sweeping the seas to whom I have taught the navigation according to Napier's tables, also land agents and surveyors, who would never have pulled a chain after them but for me, with big strapping fellows who have taken to cattle breeding, and little hop-o'-my-thumbs who have nothing for it but scribbling at a desk in order to get rich. They all come to me, and by my native genius and strength of arm I teach them to fight the battle of life.

Very exactly do I mind the day when Silver Sand came down to the school. Well could it be seen that he was not himself, though why he should come to me I did not know. I judged that he must have some important news from Sir Andrew.

So I ordered out my most advanced Latinists, together with the Grecians (who to tell the truth were in number only three, all aiming for the Kirk and the University of Groningen). I had time to slip into the house and

change my coat, and so was ready to meet the great Jesuit-taught scholar at the door.

He came in and I set the Grecians before him, to whom he put a question or two, and rather listlessly listened to them translating a passage from the Gospel of St. Mark with which they were entirely familiar.

But he waked up when the Horace class was in front of him, and suggested translations so fit and apt, that I could not have made better myself.

Then he declared himself highly satisfied, intimated that he would report the great progress of the school to his friend Sir Andrew ("friend" indeed, he might have said his master!) and would I have the goodness to grant the school a holiday? For he knew that nothing would give greater pleasure to Sir Andrew than to think of the joy of these young hearts.

I bowed my head to conceal my own pleasure and granted the request, giving out that the lessons which had not been heard that day would stand over till the morrow.

"Dominie Crogo," he said, after the shouting and tumultuous riot of the dispersal had died away in a sobering silence. "I came to speak to you upon an affair of business—Sir Andrew's and mine."

I again bowed my head and signified that I was the last man to refuse a request from such a source, or one arriving with so high credentials.

"Then," he said, "I may, I think, count upon you. You know the awkward and difficult position of affairs at the Castle—Lady Agnew and her niece being left, two lonely women among a raffle of drunken men-at-arms, the officers little better than the privates, both for the most part black sheep and natural disgraces of many a decent family."

I consoled him by saying—what was true enough—that there was that about Lady Agnew which would ensure her respect even from Lag himself, and as for the

young lady, she was full of natural spirit, and no one could take the better of her, as I had often heard from the father of Mirren McNoah, a man eminently fitted to judge.

But, as was to be expected, he hardly listened, being full of his own idea.

"Do you know that Mistress Lilias has taken up to the Castle a very handsome young man from Lancashire, one Julius Stanley, to whom both she and my Lady are for some reason or another showing a great deal of favour. Now, what effect is that likely to have on the officers of the garrison, when they return to Lochnaw?"

"I should think, sir, if I might make so bold, that the handsome young gentleman is likely to find his skin as full of holes as is a milk-sieve or the lid of a warming-pan!"

"I agree with you, Master Crogo, I think it is altogether likely, but as in a manner I am responsible for the young man to his father, who is a Lancashire Stanley, I would not have any evil happen to him here. I am sure you will help me."

"What I can do, I will do," I answered, "for your sake as well as for that of our noble patron."

"We must get the young man away from the Castle before the return of Captain Bruce and the bulk of his men. I shall charge myself with that, but I look to you to take the lad in and give him shelter and countenance afterwards."

I represented that my cottage was no fit lodging for a young English gentleman, and that I had no service but old Mistress Conachar for a few hours in the morning.

"I daresay, however, she would come in the afternoon if I paid her," I added, seeing how he was put out. "She would be glad of the extra money to send to that rascal son of hers who ran to Dumfries and 'listed in the dragoons."

"There is not the least need," said Silver Sand, "the

young man, though of ancient birth, has been brought up among my people and is not afraid to put his hand to anything."

I agreed because I could do no other, but the idea of receiving a young gentleman into my house was a difficulty to me. It lay heavy on my mind, which shows how little one can judge beforehand. For the coming of Master Julius Stanley was one of the most memorably pleasant events which ever diversified the course of my life, and I was to remember it long afterwards.

Only at the first go-off it seemed a strange thing that a gentleman should come directly from the Castle of Lochnaw to lodge with me in my thatched school-house of no more accommodation than a story and a half. However, I had a bed put up in my library, where the young man could dwell among my ancient and valuable books, and from the windows of which he could look up the pleasant vale of Leswalt, past the Druid stones, and so on, among the sheep and cattle quietly browsing on the Sheriff's holms, till the eyes' progress was barred by the sandy ridges called the dunes of Loch Ryan.

* * * * *

Silver Sand went away satisfied with his meeting with the dominie of Leswalt. He had obtained his promise, somewhat grudgingly given, but still not to be taken back. He did not care to have Juliana in the promiscuity of the new Gled's Nest along with Killer Smith and his acolytes. Nor would she be subjected to the constant scrutiny of the occupant of the Doocot Cave, Mr. Walter Dunning.

But at Castle Lochnaw neither Lilias nor the young man Julius were thinking of such things. Yet hardly a moment did they cease speaking of Silver Sand.

Julius Stanley told the tale of how his family owed their lives to him, though he said nothing about Sheriff Agnew and his court at Wigtown. They had been on

the wrong road, she admitted, like many other of good blood, Silver Sand had had influence on the right, and in the nick of time had used it to save their lives.

They never tired of these talks. They two walked out among the woods and miles of fallen pine needles bent elastic under their tread. Then out on the top of the cliff was a carpet, yellow and purple broidered up the greyish green of the short sea grasses. Here they would stop long and talk the matter out.

"He is the bravest man," Juliana Stanley would say, "the bravest and the truest. If any woman were to love him, she would love him so that she would be willing to sacrifice her soul for him. There is no one among all the gipsy folk who would not accept the hangman's rope that he might go free. He has your learning, having been sent (as the chief of the clan ought) to the best of schools, where he has learned many languages—yet without for a moment forgetting that he was born to rule the gipsy folk."

"Then," said Lilias, "he must always at the last go back to his own?"

"He must bide a time with them and apply the laws of Egypt," said the young man, twisting his hands nervously. "How otherwise could justice be done between tribe and tribe? Why, even when he was in France in the school at Issy, little more than a boy in years, I have heard my father say that cases were sent over to him to be decided."

Lilias looked keenly and almost suspiciously at Julius Stanley.

"Why do you praise this man so much to me? Why do you not, like all the other young men, strive to advantage yourself? Hal Bruce will show you how."

This was not the way in which handsome young men had been wont to treat her. They scrambled for her least favours and the higher she held the handkerchief the better they had liked it. But this young Julius had

nothing in his mouth save praises of his chieftain. He spoke with intense conviction and a pleading earnestness which at last ended by irritating the girl.

"If Silver Sand has aught to say to me, let him come and say it," she broke out suddenly, and with quite uncalled-for resentment, "when he is with me he is not nearly so candid in speech as you make him out to be."

"He is shamed," said Julius, flushing deeply, "he thinks himself bound in honour not to speak."

"And why? Dear lad, is it possible that he has set you to do his courting? With a face like yours it would set you better to go a-wooing on your own account. Never a maid would say you nay!"

"He thinks himself bound by a gipsy custom," said the young man, falteringly. "He is not so really, but the idea bids him be silent. Besides he loves you—I know he loves you——"

Juliana steadied her voice so that she could speak without a tremor. She had keyed herself up to this, and now she was suddenly in the midst of it, not in the least sure how she might acquit herself.

"I saw how it must be as soon as I set eyes upon you. I knew he could not help himself. He had been waiting for you for years, and then—there you were in flesh and blood."

The eyes of Lilias shone, and she turned quickly upon Juliana, who was busily going from white to dusky rose and back again to white.

"Did he tell you this?" she demanded with a certain fierceness.

"Certainly not," said Juliana, "he did not need to tell me. I knew!"

"You must observe very closely!"

"He is my chief, and my father's chief. We of the Stanleys learn to understand and to obey without being told."

"How can you be sure?" said Lilias.

"I am all too sure—he loves you. He cannot help himself, and loving you as he does will detach him from us, who are his kinsmen of Egypt."

"Still—I cannot understand why you tell me all this. After all, Silver Sand is of age, and can speak the English tongue—why need you meddle?"

"Because I know he will not ask for himself. He will think he is bound."

"Bound—why bound?" queried Lilias, losing patience, "perhaps he *is* bound! He may have secrets he has not told you."

"Oh no, no, I beseech you to believe me," cried Juliana, trying hard to keep back the tears out of her eyes. "I know his secrets. They are good and innocent secrets. He is my comrade as well as my chief. But when for a scruple I see him willing to lose the delight of his heart—to pass by in silence, I have taken the risk. I have thought it best to speak. Only you must not tell him, for he would never forgive me if he imagined I had betrayed him."

So Juliana battled fiercely that her man might have the thing he must desire. She had promised and she would perform. She was a gipsy, and she had neither asked nor claimed more than the gipsy side of him. All that came from his mother, all that appertained to his years of learning, were not hers and never could be.

The salons of great ladies, the Paris streets, their fine folk and fine clothes, the studious, quiet and bookish air of great libraries—these were a full half of life to the man whom she had "asked."

But what were they to a gipsy, accustomed to the ring of hammer on anvil at the bottom of Moston Clough? She could and would count him hers when, by a purling brook, brown in the pools and clear-running over the shallow pebbles, his tent stood pitched. Then among the heather and the granite John Faa was hers—hers and not another's.

She had no shame, and she felt no jealousy—at least none that she could not subdue, if she could do her man a good turn which he would never have done for himself. She was a woman of the Orient and of the older day. So Naboth's widow might have felt in the matter of Bathsheba, or Bathsheba when David the King, being old, took the Shulamite to lie in his bosom.

Yet for all that, she had never loved him more—never, indeed, so much, not even during those weeks when the blue reek of their camp fire stole aloft between the white tent and the hobbled asses.

Up in the Dungeon her love had slept. It had been barren and selfish, but now it was gloriously awake. If she, Juliana Stanley, could compass it, he should have this woman on whom he had set his heart.

She would stay this one night. She would speak for him to my Lady Agnew, then she would return to accept his just angers for her disobedience.

But first she would make him happy if she could. Afterwards—well, she dared not think of the "afterwards." Perhaps he would be so absorbed with the girl with ringlets of pale gold and the eyes of *lapis lazuli,* that he would think no more of the hills, the skies, and the gipsy *tans*—all the fresh, humble, marvellous outdoor life they had lived together.

Never a moon should rise but she would pray: "For a month—only a month, leave him to me—to be mine alone—altogether mine." Never a sun should rise but love would leap up all fresh in her heart, as on that first morning, when she moved about so stilly getting breakfast, fearing to disturb him. Then under her breath she would call to the sun: "Awaken him with the glory in his eyes, and let him be mine for just this one day more!"

Nevertheless, because he wished it—because he could not help but wish it, she would give him his heart's desire.

XXIII

THE GUEST OF DOMINIE CROGO

THE waves roared beneath the cliffs of the Black Shore. On the long sweep of the Knock Bay the wide North Atlantic made riot, pouring like a mill stream through the narrow trap-door of the Irish Channel. I was on the lookout for my *pensionaire*. Indeed for the second time that week I had dismissed the boys and girls earlier than usual that I might be at liberty to do the bidding of Silver Sand.

I knew very well that I must not do this too often, because after one of these extra half-holidays, it always costs me a frayed ash-plant and a good forenoon to bring the school to an exact knowledge of itself.

The chambers were all in order, and I could not but admit that Mistress Connachar had done her best. I had helped her with the scouring part—for I am a great boiler of soap, and many came from Kirkcolm and even Glenluce to learn the right rendering of the tallow, the burning of the bracken, and the careful admixture of the two after a fashion of my own.

So the boards were scoured, white as napery, such rugs as I possessed were laid down in the young man's room, and I found a farmer, the father of three of my lad bairns, who by a useful providence had killed a sheep that week. I had plenty of eggs—it was luckily the time when the hens gave the best harvest—and Crummie, the cow, stood at the yard gate twice a day complaining to be eased of the fullness of her udder. I had also caught a basket of trout which would do bravely for

supper, and for the morrow Jack Fingask, the fisher-lad, had promised me the "pick of his catch," in return for a little book-keeping in the winter evenings.

My young lad was late in arriving, but I knew that Silver Sand would not fail me. All day long I had smelt the smoke signals by which the gipsies talk to one another. Nay, once going to the school-house door, I counted seven puffs of clear white reek like fleecy fine-weather cloudlets, only small, round, and unmistakably of human artifice, follow each other into the blue, where they slowly faded.

I think it was about nine of the clock when I saw the two come towards me, one marching before very proud and angry—that was Silver Sand, and the other a few steps in the rear—that was my gentleman.

Now I had not an idea of what had taken place between them, but I could quickly see that all the hotness was on Silver Sand's part. Once or twice he spoke sharply, even snappishly, to the young man, but the other only looked down and was silent. I could have pitied him, he seemed so humble, and so conscious of ill-doing.

"A good-night to you, Dominie," said Silver Sand. "I have brought you the young man, Master Julius Stanley. He will stay with you for the present at my charges. He is not exactly in hiding, but it will be better for himself, and still better for his kin if he shows himself out of doors as little as possible."

"I understand," said I, "Lord, what a raft of good brave gentlemen are in hiding here and there, like Mr. James and yourself, in holes and corners of the earth. Now, though I own but a thatched cottage, it is sufficiently far from the wayside to be generally safe, except from such as know of its whereabouts. Also I am in good odour with the curate (whose accounts and writings I do for him) and indeed no safer and more comfortable shelter can any young gentleman expect who has meddled with the King's concerns, a thing which I never do my-

self. So come your ways, Master Julius, and see what I and that deaf old woman Widow Connachar have prepared for you."

Silver Sand turned about with a general gesture of farewell, but he did not speak—neither to the young lad nor to myself, which I for my part, thought very ill done of him. It mattered not a buckie to me, of course. But when I saw the young lad stand as if he had been struck in the face, God only knows how sorry I was for him.

"What have you been doing to put him in such a heat against you?" I asked, while the youth stood fixed and gazing.

"I disobeyed," he murmured, so low that I could hardly hear his voice. "I disobeyed—but it was meant for his own good."

"Why then not tell him so?"

"Oh, that!" he cried with a gesture of despair. "That is no use. It would only make him far angrier than he is now! Some day he shall know and forgive."

So dismally enough the two of us took our way into the school-house of Leswalt.

* * * * *

The next day was dull and dowie, the wet birds cowering with flufted feathers on the drooping branches, or sitting in moist clutches under the eaves, but somehow it seemed as if the house were all right within, and there was a fire in every room.

I found to my surprise that the lad Stanley, whom I had taken to be a young gentleman accustomed to be waited on hand and foot, had descended between five and six of the clock and had—but stay; I cannot tell so briefly and at this tail-end of a sentence what he had done.

Julius Stanley had found a clean blue apron of Mistress Connachar's and had belted it about him, rolling up his

sleeves, and, so prepared, had lit the kitchen fire. The brasses were shining and the bars were blackened with charcoal paste of which I kept a store in the little cupboard along with my family Bible.

I thought as I lay in bed half asleep and half awake, that surely Windram's troopers from Stranraer had taken the school-house of Leswalt and were making free with my good things. Then I bethought me that I had given the key to my deaf old helper Mistress Connachar, so that she might come early and wait upon Silver Sand's young gentleman—taking him his hot water, or his boots well greased, or anything else his aristocracy might require.

So I was not in so great a haste to get up and dress as I might have been, knowing that all was going on well.

But the cry that came presently from below caused me to spring clean out of my bed.

"Come your ways down, dominie, your breakfast will be on the table as soon as I hear your heels on the stair."

I can assure you I never dressed more quickly in my life—not even when at dead of night, a troop of horse stumbled against the old school-house and thundered at the door demanding liquor.

I went down and lo, there was a white cloth laid as if for a provost and glasses set out for the morning ale! The eggs and bacon being cooked together garnished the apartment more than all flowers or odorous oils. I felt myself filled with a hoard of hardy healthy desires, vigorous hungers, and the blood of life drummed in my ears at least twenty years younger than when I went to bed the night before.

Julius stood at the table-end saluting me with a "Good-morning, dominie, this is what they teach us the trick of in France!"

"And a very good trick too," quoth I, laughing, "when I marry and have sons, I shall send them all to France."

"Send the girls also," he said, "it hath done wonders for Lilias Agnew."

"Ah, the Lady Lilias, tell me how she does. You rogue, I can see that there is a strong attraction in that quarter—mayhap an orange ribband already in the knotting."

This I thought not so ill for an old dog of a dominie. But the young man did not seem dismayed. He neither laughed like one flattered, nor deprecated like a man who would say, "It is so, but pray do not say anything about it."

He seemed to be circling round and round as gannets do before they plunge, in a world of dreams all his own, or perhaps dwelling alone in his heart with his own heart sorrow. He was of English birth and as I supposed of gipsy blood—which of itself might account for anything strange.

"If I could make Mistress Lilias happier," he said soberly, "I would give my life."

But he said it in such a manner that I did not think any more of showing myself jocose—which I own to being, sometimes, after the manner of my patron, my good master Sir Andrew. For in Galloway there are certain things upon which a man is expected to be jocose in company—such as good feeding at table, and who eats the most—the pairing of young couples at Yule and Hallowe'en—who goes with which at the lantern-carrying on St. John's Eve. On these and such like topics a man can never exhaust his wit, for he can repeat himself—or he can repeat what he has heard from others, and yet the laugh will follow loud and hearty, as though he had said something as fresh to the world as is a babe new-born.

So feeling rather than understanding his mood, I sat me down at one table-end and he at the other. The meal was such as I had not tasted since my mother Mary Crogo died, and indeed for some time before, for latterly

she was a poor bed-bound woman. Served it was, too, in a fashion that I never saw the mate of.

"Are you a changeling or a fairy child, Master Julius?" I said. "Tell me at once that I may know what an honest man has taken into his house."

He shook his head smilingly, but I am not sure that he paid any great attention to my compliment. Of course I might have known. So well-looking a youth would have matters of his own to think over without troubling his head about the musty conceits of a grey old fellow in a scratch wig.

When my deaf house-wife appeared, she was set to such a cleaning and scrubbing, water-laving and dusting, as she had never even vaguely imagined. I expected every minute she would put down her water-pail and go, the which would have suited me very ill, for it was difficult for a well-looking bachelor man to have any woman in his house without scandal in that rumour-spreading, free-talking, censorious county of Wigtown. But Mistress Connachar was like Cæsar's wife. At least she was above suspicion, though not perhaps for the same reason—which was an ugliness so consummate, so intimate, so domestic that even a session clerk had perforce to be held guiltless.

Yet this slip of a youth had managed to steal into that grim old heart and she not only did what he suggested to her, but accepted emandations as to ways and means, which if I had offered would have been rejected with contumely—that is, the bucket of water would have been thrown in my face.

In the course of that day the school-house was entirely a different place. It seemed that even the scholars going to take their dinner pails into the kitchen were quieted by the presence of the newcomer. He exercised a kind of fascination for us all. I believe I taught better during the hour or two that Julius Stanley passed at my desk listening to the routine of the school. Then again he

would go out into the little wood beyond the dyke of my cabbage beds and walk there alone. It is neither sad nor unusual so to do. When I myself was thinking out anything difficult of solution, or even solely for something to do, I had trodden out a plainly marked way, where the feet would not stumble, and there he was walking up and down. But in his case I was sure it was no page of Euripides, no problem of Newton, newly set, which troubled him. He walked wistful and sat, up and down, back and forth in a way which made me sad to see.

It came into my mind that it was because of Mistress Lilias that he carried this burden on his mind. So I set paper fine and white before him, on a desk in the ben room, and whispered low in his ear that, as I had my great and little entries at the Castle, I could get a note quite safely to the young lady's hand without the knowledge of anybody.

Whereupon at once he sat him down and kept at it all the afternoon, writing as for a wager, and covering sheet after sheet of my foolscap—so that when all was ended, tied, and sealed, it was more a sort of *Liber Amorum* which I had to carry to Lochnaw than a *billet doux* which can be passed from palm to palm without anyone being the wiser.

I must admit that though for the time being the young gentleman seemed interested and solaced by the writing of this letter, yet the results were not what I expected. He stood at the edge of the orchard which looks towards the High Woods as if he was waiting for the appearance of Silver Sand or James Agnew.

"They dare not stir out either of them till it is the dusk of the evening. (So I spoke to comfort young Stanley seeing him to be disappointed.) And what is more, I am doubtful if they will venture then. Do you hear that?"

The rattle of musketry sounded far over among the headlands. Then my young gentleman suddenly paled,

gasped, and would have dropped on the floor if I had not caught him.

"They are killing him! Let me go!" he murmured, "I will go to him!"

A speech which would have surprised me intensely in any other circumstances, save for the fact that in giving him air (which was necessary in his half-fainting condition) I had discovered that Julius Stanley was a woman!

XXIV

SILVER SAND MAKES A RESOLVE

SILVER SAND deserved to be pitied, for the good reason that his case was indeed pitiable, but I am not sure that any reader will grant him more than the vengeful "serve him right" which punishes stupidities far oftener than it does crimes.

Silver Sand had certainly not behaved well. He had taken Juliana to be introduced to Lilias entirely of his own accord. He could not have foreseen the consequences—man that is mortal cannot fortell how two women will deal the one with the other, but consequences, and those serious, of one kind or another the simplest might have foretold.

It was his fate to be beloved where he could not fully respond—his fate to love where he could not hope for a return in kind. Yet he deserved better things than Fate seemed to promise him now.

"For Nature had but little clay,
Like that of which she moulded him."

Gipsy born and gently bred, he had two sides to his nature, and one or the other of them was certain to bring him into trouble. This had happened now, and with the eternal reticence of the sons of the Black Blood, he had been silent when half a dozen words might have cleared all. His own fault! Of course, but then he was not you or I. He was John Faa, gipsy chief and man of the world. To me he was a gorgeous pomegranate flower, flaming scarlet in a world of modest daisies and douce pot-plants.

But at least in his earlier years, when love is the crown of life, his nature was not arranged so that he could be continuously happy. He would have sunny blinks by the way, and perhaps many of these—but of solid, solid, four-walled happiness he could know nothing.

He came stepping down to the school-house, at what in Scotland has ever been the amorous hour, the hour of leaning on stiles and of slow, quiet, mostly silent promenades among the barley stooks. And knowing how my guest had watched the gaps among the hills to the left of the High Woods, I ostentatiously took my candle and went into my study, there to drowse over an ode of Horace, a satisfactory translation of which refused to come to my mind.

All the same for the purposes of this book I am privileged to know how they met—Silver Sand and his girl-secretary, who had watched all day for him.

Over the sterile sand of the dunes he came to her, and she watched him come—seeing him through a kind of transparent mist which may have been in the Leswalt valleys or again only in her eyes. Then along the edge of the pines, where they had sent a young but agile party of shoots clambering down the sides of the water-course. Anon through the fields of cultivated land to the patches of brier and blackberry. There she meant to meet him, for indeed she could stand it no longer. Memories beat about her heart. A yellow half-moon shone down through the haze, swollen and misshapen as if seen through welling tears.

But at last she met him, and in an irresistible *elan* of tenderness she threw herself into his arms, sobbing out, "Oh, forgive me—forgive me. Send me back and I will go gladly. But I cannot bear that you should be angry with me!"

"I am not angry with you, Juliana," he said, holding her head tenderly. "I ask you to pardon me. For I

only am to blame. I alone have done wrong, and it is just that I should be punished."

"No, no, it was I, Juliana—I had this suit made and came as a boy, to surprise you, thinking that you would be pleased. Only the whole world turned upside down somehow, and the happiness I meant turned into the bitterness of disappointment."

Again she came near to weeping, but Silver Sand, laying his hand on her head said with great solemnity, "Juliana Faa, you are my wife, and it is right that as such I should acknowledge you. We shall leave this place and go back among the hills. But first there is a declaration to make. The Killer has been to the Dungeon and brought back for you the dress of a maid. It lies now in the school-house yonder. You must return and put it on. Then we will go down to Nevin's Isle and call out the Lady Lilias that she may hear the whole tale from my lips."

"No, no, no," cried Juliana, almost fiercely, her arms about his neck and tightly clasped, "I have told her all it is good for her to know. I am not married to you, John Faa. I will not have it said. I shall never marry any man. Let me go back alone and I shall bless you all the days of my life. But for God's sake do not make me humble myself to Lilias Agnew!"

"Humble yourself," Silver Sand's voice was dangerous, "I count it no humiliation to any woman that I should declare myself married to her."

"Oh no, no, John Faa—" cried the girl, fairly anguished now by the misunderstanding, "I would be prouder of that than anything in the world. But I have pled your case with her—told her how you loved her—I have beseeched her for you."

She had sunk down before him in the deep twilight of the copse, so low that she was almost crouching. He stood above her black and menacing against the faint violet of the evening sky.

"You have told Lilias Agnew that I love her—you have beseeched her—pled my cause with her?"

"Yes, yes, I have told you so, my dear master—who should tell her so if not I? What other than I has a right to give you happiness if it be in my power? But do not be angry with me. I saw it the moment I set eyes on you two together!"

Like the sudden illumination of the field of battle by the lightning flash, the truth came upon the mind of Silver Sand. He lifted the true wife in his arms and held her there. She had done her best to separate them for ever, but it was by such a sacrifice as never woman was called upon to make.

"Juliana," he said gently, "it shall be as you say. You shall not be shamed before another woman, because I love you for yourself and not for what you have done."

"You do not—you cannot—you love Lilias—I saw it in your eyes."

"You came in time to save me, Juliana," said Silver Sand, heavily, "I was in some danger, I do not deny—as who would not! But I thank God that I have neither hurt her heart nor troubled her repose. You and I, Juliana, shall make a new start. I did wrong not to return when the Sheriff was safe away for Ireland, and there was nothing more for me to do there. We shall start for the hills and leave the Red Killer and his men to watch over my Lady and her niece in Castle Lochnaw."

Hardly yet could Juliana grasp what was before her. She had burned up her universe, sacrificed her dearest dreams, and now for the moment she seemed like some half-drowned thing cast up after the tempest among the foam-froth and rust-wrack of the shore.

"But Lilias," she murmured, "the happiness I promised her? What can we say to Lilias?"

"Do not think of it, Juliana," he said, "I shall know what to say to Lilias. I shall do what I ought to have

done at the first—I shall make things clear beyond any farther risk of mistake."

"But I told her of your love!"

"Then you spoke without knowledge, the imagining of your brave fantastic heart. But I never have spoken a word to Lilias which her brother might not speak—oh, what a dullard I am (he broke off) I talk like a prating poll-parrot—and I making all this sorrow."

"Not you, John Faa, I made it when I was a silly girl, by setting my heart on you suddenly—when I asked you knowing that you could not refuse."

"Only let me go and tell the truth to Lilias," said Silver Sand.

"Let you!—You are my master—go."

And with bitter grief in his heart Silver Sand turned from the cultivated fields below the High Woods and set his face for what he counted the last time in the direction of the well-trodden path which led to the point of Nevin's Isle. He did not know how he was to make his confession, nor how she would take it, in silent scorn or with the fierce bitterness of accusation. But he knew already that the worst was over. He would again be a true man, and walk in his own self-respect as on a clear night after thunder and lightning, deluge and hail.

Juliana according to her custom watched him out of sight and then turned also, and with slow steps walked to the house of the dominie, there to find a canvas roll laid out for her upon her bed. It was the change of costume which Silver Sand had promised her. The Killer had arrived and her father and her father's clan were in waiting to welcome them in the Dungeon of Buchan.

"Oh, I am not worth it—why did he do it?"

XXV

APPLES OF SODOM

HIS feet trampled among pure orange gold. That which splashed his instep was buttercups. That which swept his knee was ragweed, but in the low broad light from the west all appeared of that rich colour, fading farther off into smoky patches of turquoise and the deeper purple shadows of the great park trees.

He reached the edge of the promontory where he feared to go. Everywhere the long grass, where it was not worn down by their feet on happy nights, rustled and rippled like waves of wheat.

The last glory of the sun had sunk down into the sea. The lakes of pale violet had faded into the velvet glory of a night of stars, and Silver Sand knew that before that sun peered over the rim of the Stewartry mountains and inundated with light all the wide plain of the shire, the die would be cast.

Late as it was the bees had not ceased humming in the Sheriff's lime trees. On such days of heat they are greedy and work late. Silver Sand stood alone with his feet on the familiar pebbles. The windows of the Castle were dark that night. So in all probability Earshall was holding high revel with Windram in Stranraer, and his men were safely billeted among the burghers.

Silver Sand was sad. Like all men of gipsy blood, he was easily and strongly impressed by the moods of nature. And now the sough of the wind in the pines, the lapping of the wavelets on the shore, the pale glow of Will-o'-the-Wisp among the reed-beds all saddened and discountenanced him.

She came, not with her usual frank comradeship holding out both her hands, but slowly and with reserve, almost as if she already knew. Silver Sand wished that she did know. But his subtle gipsy instinct, as sensitive to the mind of a woman as for a mood of nature, revealed to him the true reason. She had listened to the words of Juliana. She believed that here was the man who loved her and who had come to tell her so. To go forth to meet such an one at close of day, was not the same as to talk over family affairs and the day's doings at the Castle with her uncle's friend and the house's protector.

She came with her high riding boots parting the deep fringe of gold which summer had spread everywhere along the ways of the wood.

"If only she would begin to speak, it would be easier," groaned Silver Sand within his own heart. But aloud he said, "The garrison has left you in peace, I see, at least for to-night."

"Yes," she answered indifferently, her fingers toying with a spray of May-blossom plucked on the way, "we have the Castle to ourselves and our usual guard—Hal Bruce and his pair of sleepy drunkards. There was no real need to come to-night, because I knew that the unlighted windows would tell you all that I have to say——"

"I am glad you have come," Silver Sand broke in desperately. "I have to tell you that I am summoned suddenly away on the business of Egypt!"

She turned upon him quickly, with a gesture at once inquiring and yet ready for wrath.

"I thought your friend young Stanley said that you were to take less part in such things, and I remember the charge my uncle gave you before he consented to go on board ship. Are these things to be forgotten—are we to be cast aside—now that his back is turned?"

"I am bound indeed by great friendship, and such bonds of amity as may exist among men, to Sir Andrew.

I promise you that Lochnaw shall be as safe in my absence as in my presence—perhaps more so. But I am called by a tie of another nature to depart, and whether I return or not depends on you."

The light was not clear enough for Silver Sand to see the red which sprang to the girl's cheek. But he divined it and cursed himself for the awkwardness of his tongue. He was talking exactly as, after hearing Juliana's pleading of his cause, she would expect him to speak.

But the slip restored resolve and he determined to get the worst over, come what might. Thereupon he plunged into the tale of how he had begun the administration of the folk of Egypt in Scotland, which was his birthright. He told of the fight with Jasper, and how on the shores of the Loch of Enoch he had been "asked" by Jasper's daughter, Juliana.

"But you refused the forward minx?" the clear voice of Lilias rang out, so that had he been awake, Hal Bruce might have heard it on the terrace of the Castle.

"I could not refuse," said Silver Sand, steadily, "a chief of the Faas does not live for himself, but for the clan. Besides the girl was strictly within her right—such is the law of our people."

"Then you married her—and all I have heard—all I have thought is false—lies—lies—only lies!"

"According to gipsy custom I was married to her," continued Silver Sand, who felt the edge of his world crumbling and breaking beneath him like rotten ice. "But I do not say that all you have heard is untrue. I do not know what you have heard."

"You know very well, John Faa, you sent that young Stanley to work upon me. He was a handsome lad and could speak well. You counted upon him. Thank God I have a heart that is not to be taken by wiles. But oh, the meanness of it!"

"I think not," said Silver Sand, restored to himself by the hostile douche of speech. "I knew not that any

intimate speech would pass between you, and I had the best reasons for thinking so."

"What were those reasons?" And her voice for once sounded harsh and untender.

"I did not believe there would pass any confidence between you, because (he hung long on the words he was to speak, they could never be recalled) because Julius Stanley was Juliana, my wife."

He could have added, "according to the gipsy law," but he desired in nothing to spare himself. She would detest him—that was certain. He had better become accustomed to that as soon as might be. At any rate, he would have no more misunderstandings. He had already supped his fill of them and he recognised his fault.

"But—but," faltered Lilias, "he—she—who spoke to me—pleaded for you—swore that you only loved *me*. Oh, cruel, cruel! How she must have hated me to do that."

"On the contrary," said Silver Sand, very gravely, "it was because she loved me over much. She thought mistakenly to make me happy."

"Mistakenly," the voice of Lilias took on a more scornful intonation, "ah, yes—how mistakenly. I suppose she thought she was not worthy of you—of *you!*"

Her voice gathered strength and volume.

"Why, a loving woman is worth ten thousand thousand of such men. But do not be afraid. I shall not betray you. After all, you are like other men—only a coward where women are concerned. But I would have you remember that only my pride and not my heart has been hurt. John Faa, I wish you well. Still more, I wish well to your wife. She is a noble woman, may she never know how base a man can be. If so, the worse for you! For I warn you, John Faa, she will not pass it over as I am doing. No, do not speak—do not follow me. Good-by!"

She glided into the dusk of the trees and for a moment

as her figure crossed the interstices of the columnar trunks, where the flame of sunset lingered, he could see her flitting rapidly towards the house. He stood still quite unconscious of his own pain (like a man who has received a mortal wound and knows it not). The cue owls cried like cats in the brake and passed unseen overhead with a soft "fluff" of feathers.

He saw the dark house and stood watching it, set massive and foresquared against the abyss of night. He never took his eyes off the black part of the roof where it cut the stars, till high in the Eastern tower he saw a light break out. It was the taper lit by Lilias Agnew in her chamber.

XXVI

LIKE A FOUNTAIN SEALED

SILVER SAND had at last done what was right. He had spoken the word he ought to have spoken at first, and so spared much agony of hearts. Yet it is strange how little comfort the fact brought him.

All the way back to the school-house of Leswalt he went over and over in his mind the stages of his interview with Lilias. It had been harder than he had dreamed of—harder, he thought, than he deserved. She ought to have understood the necessities of his position. He did not know that a woman will forgive anything, even a crime, to the man who proves himself the master of circumstances. But contrarywise, will have nothing to say to a man who lets circumstances master him.

In spite of the troubled dream in which he walked, his educated ear and natural aptitude for remarking and registering all things, made him conscious of the reviving ease and pleasant routine of the country, which took up its course again with the absence of the dragoons. The very presence of the red coats, hated and feared as they were, stopped the spontaneous gaiety of rural life. He passed a farm and heard the cows munching steadily in the home pastures. Last night they had been hidden deep among the moors. But they would be watched carefully till they fed their fill and long ere Earlshall was back again, they would be lost among the clefts of the mosses, or blocked and guarded in heathery hollows and defiles from which neither head nor horn ever showed.

It was a strange time, those last days of the great

Persecution. I cannot say that bairns never cried. But I do say that they made little noise, weeping silently to themselves. Cattle lowed no more at the milking stile. Sheep did not cry to each other across the gulfs of air. There was a Sabbath silence, and a few women only were to be seen about a farm in the daytime. But the work was done at night.

A voice hailed Silver Sand out of the gloom—"Come and lend a hand here!" And as he hesitated, scarcely awakened out of his dream of anguish, the voice added "Be not afraid—it is upon the Wanderers' service!"

This showed how carefully the policing of these midnight labours was done, that they should speak out to a chance passer-by in the darkness without fear of mistake.

But as a fact, except for the uniformed dragoons and a few camp-followers, the whole country, lairds, loons, farmers, and shepherd laddies, were with the persecuted and against the King. The dragonnades had only succeeded in fixing a deep dislike, an inflexible resolve, upon the whole face of the country once as loyal and law-abiding as Kent or London City.

Now the wind blew no longer at the King's bidding, but where it listed.

From among the red roofs of one of the larger farms, there came the noise of flails falling, steady and muffled, upon the sheaves on the threshing floor.

A lantern hung to a peg in the south-eastern wall, and in the flickering glow Silver Sand could see stalwart forms stripped to the waist, massive brown arms falling bare and rhythmical. Not from these had the summons come.

He leaped a dyke and found a woodman with faggoted wood piled high on a huge trail cart. He was disengaging four tired horses from the shafts.

"Wait, a little, friend, and give me a hand. This is my Lady's wood for the winter, concerning which Sir Andrew has written to my father."

He was back again as soon as he had his horses safe in the stall, and Silver Sand helped him to stack the faggots in an outhouse belonging to the home-farm of Lochnaw. Sounds of subdued laughter and rustic merriment came from byre and stackyard. He heard the plunge of the butter churn from somewhere quite unseen, and as he tossed down faggot after faggot from the high piled load, he could see, over the open half-door of the barn, the girls come with winnowing sieves and the flat baskets of stretched skins called locally "wechts." They bent and scooped up the seed from the beaten ears with both hands, while the men stood looking at them, resting and leaning upon their flails. Then outside on the winnower's platform the work was also begun. The wind from the sea was scarcely strong enough, but still Silver Sand could hear the dry rattle as the grain poured down into a cone-shaped heap, and the chaff blew in his face as he stood there on the great wood waggon and pitched faggots to a man half seen below.

"So much harvesting,
So little grain,
So much hither-thithering—
Is life worth the pain?"

The thing rhymed itself in Silver Sand's mind as he received the teamster's hearty "Thank you, brother Wanderer—as much to you next time."

He went on his way. Down on Nevin's Isle he had lost a friend, perhaps if he had been wise or even discreet, more than a friend. He had seen that lonely light break out from the dark front of the great house, and he knew that Lilias was moaning, "Oh, why did he spoil it all?"

Ah, why indeed? Why had he killed that gay carelessness, that complete and childlike trust? He was the better man—the honester man—but, ah, how much the more unhappy! It ought not to be so. Account ought

to be taken of the circumstances. He had done what he could. He had a thousand excuses, a thousand explanations, all sound and excellent. Only he had let himself be condemned unheard. Judgment had been entered by default, and breach could never be repaired, labour he never so hard, charm he never so wisely.

But there was Juliana—Juliana, of whom as Lilias had most truly said, he would never be worthy. He had to consider Juliana. He must throw off the burden he had hoisted on his own back, and meet her with a smile. She deserved that—yes, a thousandfold more. Never had he imagined it to be in the power of any woman so to love a man. He knew he was not worthy, but if men were only to be loved according to their deserts, most of us would go loveless from the earth.

There she was, her gay gallants' trappings all packed away, dressed in her sober gown of grayish Quaker blue, pleated and short-skirted, ready for the road.

The dominie, very proud and joyful that dominie was, as I do remember, had her by the hand.

"I like Juliana better than her brother," said I.

"What brother?" Silver Sand asked as he came in. He was somewhat dazed I think—by coming into the shining of so many lights, for in honour of the event I had lit up as for a meeting of Kirk Session.

"What brother?" I laughed, "Hear to him! why who but the dear departed Julius, who is now folded up neatly in that hand-package!"

I mention this to show that even at my age I really was a ready and jocose man.

"You are late, John," she said, looking up at him, beseechingly, with eyes so full and moist—that—well never mind what I thought. If Silver Sand had not stepped up and kissed her, by gad, I should!

But he did, perhaps because he did not wish to lose all my good opinion of him. Perhaps, at least so I hope, for other reasons.

"It is done," he said, "done as I said, and I am glad!"

"Glad, John," (she laughed suddenly and nervously) "tell me, are you really glad?"

"Glad—glad—glad, I tell you, Juliana, glad that it is all done with, but she says, and she says true, that you ought never to forgive me!"

"Oh, *that*—" cried Juliana in a little sobbing throbbing ecstasy, "she knows nothing about that. Do not let us speak about it, John. You have not told me what kept you so late. The dominie and I were almost coming out to look for you."

"You would have found me at the home farm pitching faggots from a trail cart to help a teamster whom I had never seen, but who hailed me as a brother and a helper."

"Why did you do it, John? Could not I have done it for you? Or the Red McKitterick or any of his men? What need was there for you, the chief of the Faas and my husband, to be standing on any yokel's trail cart?"

Accord was made, gladsome and complete on Juliana's side, and only in the most secret place of John Faa's heart, slept, like a fountain sealed, the image of Lilias.

XXVII

"CLEAR IN THE CLOSING STRAIN"

THEY spent the suave month of September, distinctively and eminently Scottish among all the months of the year, with their tents and the two grey asses among the dry rustling heath bells and the full glory of the heather.

In the short space of separation Juliana had bloomed into the fuller woman. She was clear-eyed, more resolute, more apt to speak, infinitely more companionable. She had been tried in the fire, and, being fine gold, had not been found wanting. She chose the camps always half-way or thereby between tribe and tribe. It was not fitting (she said) that John Faa should set up his tent among the dirty *tans* of his wandering tribes. He must keep himself apart, and so his decisions should owe nothing to this one's suggestion or that man's prompt payment of dues. She made it a law that before any complaints were brought or any of the justice of Egypt administered, all that was owing to John Faa should be paid, settled, and approved by Juliana, his wife, whose judgment in such matters was held by the clans to be far more accurate than her lord's. And this did John Faa good among the turbulent brotherhood, penuriously adding silver and copper pieces to their hoard at kirk and market, farmtown and clachan, from one end of Scotland to the other.

In their opinion it did not become a Faa to appear too hungry for his duties. But no fault could be found with a woman who showed herself determined that an easy-

going great man should not be put upon. So everyone was satisfied, and the brown-skinned Gitanos nudged each other after a bargain was struck or a Gorgio flouted and cheated.

"Remember Juliana's part is so much and so much." And, as a matter of fact, they came secretly during the dark hours and laid information against each other with grins of wicked pleasure on their faces.

And the next morning before an intent and approving tribe, the guilty were summoned forth and made to pay up according to their dues.

So during the last September of the Terror before the Great Indulgence, Silver Sand moved about slowly and tasted again the life of his people. Once a week he had a messenger from Chief McKitterick on guard above the Doocot Cave, and a letter from the dominie down at the school-house, telling him all the news of the Castle. How the troops were little now at Lochnaw, how Windram had been moved to Kirkcudbright—where there was a hotter brand of disaffection or at least a hatred more easily blown into a flame of rebellion—how gladly enough Bruce of Earlshall had settled his men down into Windram's old quarters at Stranrear, pleased to be within a town again, and nearer to the norland moors, the country of their sweepings and scourings and countless marchings. Lastly, how Hal Bruce of Windy Standard had been left alone to garrison Lochnaw, with his usual brace of good-for-nothings. But he was minded so little that as often as James was not at Eglinton or Innermessan he would both dine and sleep at the Castle—of course with a sentinel or two posted.

In these communications I said no more than "Mistress Lilias seems to go much about her ordinary"—or something equally vague and unsatisfactory. I did not tell him that she walked abroad with the dignity of an offended queen, or rather like Diana after she had caught

sight of Acteon. What, I ask you, would have been the good of unsettling the lad's mind?

So I let him go on his way, under the healing blinks of the soft September sunshine, the September silences and the rustle of September foliage, which, if you have noticed (or whether or no), is like an old man's wit, a little dryer and more bitter than when bursting with the soft sap of spring.

Silver Sand minded many things of his September circuit among his kin long afterwards. They returned to him in dreams to the day of his death—not the happiest or most memorable memories perhaps, but by a great deal the most clear and permanent. He remembered for instance, Ingleston Glen, where the tall trees spring up suddenly from their rock anchorages. High up there the flowers were late and sparse, but aloft he could hear the tits cracking the pine cones in their constant angry search for insects, boring beetles and such like. Higher still the rooks clustered and swayed clamorously, or chased each other with exultant shrieks down the wind. He had become the true wanderer of the ancient time, a man out of the age of stone axes and flint arrow-chippings.

He would cast his mind back to the days at Lochnaw. He could call up the point of Nevin's Isle, and hear the waters lap on the little beach of pebbles. But he was not hurt by the remembrance. His whole being was simplified and his horizon bounded by that clear season of autumn weather, and his mind attuned to that stormy parliament which the crow people were holding overhead.

It was not at all like his first time with Juliana. Now they had captured as if by right of conquest a confidence in each other—the gift and capacity of interesting talk. For one thing (and it was a great thing) Juliana proved herself infinitely more skilled than Silver Sand in the lore of the country. She read the air, the light summer flaws, and high balanced wisps of cloud, the random

gusts of wind that came, stirring only the tops of the highest trees and that only for a moment—the mystery of "carry" and "over-carry," when the clouds scudded different ways, or a thunderstorm banked itself up in the south after a day of heat. Then they would strike their tents and make for a shelter—generally a shieling with a roof, where in lambing time the shepherds watched their flocks—or a cave among the rocks—anywhere to get out of the danger of trees where the thunderbolts began to fall.

All this lore was new and delightful to the school-bred Silver Sand, who drank it all in with the eagerness of a boy, but still with a latent sense of having known it all once and forgotten it. Which, indeed, was true enough, seeing that Juliana was teaching him the gipsy inheritance of the wisdom of Out-of-doors—the rich heritage of a thousand years of careful and continuous observation.

She could tell him to a nicety where any "Wanderer" lay deep hidden, or where a stray dog was hunting, by the noise of the curlews crying, or the lapwings stooping and diving. She could tell the time of day by the shutting or opening of the flowers, and the season of the year in the gipsy calendar by the departure of some birds of passage and the arrival of others.

Mostly they kept high up on the barrens of the mountains, penetrating deep into the head waters of Dee and Doon, and reaching even to the springs of Clyde and Nith.

At night he would look out of their tent door, and if Juliana were awake, or as often happened, perhaps adjusting a log on their camp fire, he would fall to comparing his Jesuit-trained knowledge with hers. He knew all the constellations, and could tell many stars by their names. But Juliana gave one casual glance at the slow-wheeling multitude and said: "It is half past two —better sleep for another good hour. I shall wake you, John. Have no fear. It is good to sleep in the morning

coolness. Let me draw a silk sash of mine about your head, and you will find sleep come. So!"

Then sure enough he would drop back into dreamless sleep, and when he awoke, Juliana would be bending over him, smiling a smile of happiness unutterable, the smile of the woman who possesses. The asses would be tethered quite near the camp, waiting the master's edict, whether they were to go on that day or not, and the breakfast of the hills, trout from the burns, bacon from their flitch, eggs from the last farm, would be ready for the excellent appetite with which he rose.

So on these barren mountain heights and under these changeful Western skies, life passed like a dream. It was the true apprenticeship of Silver Sand to his gipsy trade. Every day or two they found some encampment of gipsy folk, who are most widely scattered at this season, Wallaces, Bollands, Highland Shuans and Rorrisons, who had come far from their winter "hauf" or homing shelter.

Juliana collected the dues of the Chiefship from all, and if they were dull or slow of comprehension, who but Juliana taught them in clean-cut Romany their duty to the head of all Egypt. Then John Faa himself dealt out the true justice with a sentence against which there was no appeal. He would compose quarrels of trade and barter, make himself an umpire in gipsy horse-races for valuable stakes—wild dashes from point to point, with everything allowed except striking the other man's horse over the head, a mob of keelies or rag-tag urchins yelling behind, or battling for the honour of their favourite in the dust or head-over-heels among the heather.

Then again John Faa, having so learned in Paris, showed himself a wise surgeon, and the old women of the tribe gathered about to watch his manner of setting of a bone or reducing a fracture. They had their own skill and art, which Juliana knew and could practice, but they were not above learning things so simple and yet so

serious. So John Faa operated with his shining French instruments which (it is hardly necessary to say) were in Juliana's keeping. And when he laid them out on a white cloth to be ready for his magic, and during the brief gasping minutes of the mystery itself, she was his only acolyte, his confidant, his assistant, quick and ready, needing no commanding and not a word of advice. He merely turned at a critical moment, and there she was ready with what he wanted.

Then, after all was over, when the patient, having passed the minutes which were almost like the agony of death, now lay smiling and bandaged, there would be a feast and a conclave. Nothing formal, of course, but the news of Egypt and of the wilds, all fresh and fresh like a newspaper brought damp from the press into a coffee-house of the city.

Sometimes such tribal feasts would take place during the heat of an afternoon heavy with sunshine and stirless air, the ripe chestnuts popping and pelting in a ruddy golden shower all down the glade—or again after a swiftly passing storm, the sky unnaturally blue, cleaned, besomed, and swept out by the cloud whisks, every point and leaf glittering with its diamond drop, which as the wind blew went pitter-patter on the trodden earth.

At such times they crowded close in to the great tree trunks—pines for choice, where all was dry as under an umbrella of deep green shade.

"Who are the Wanderers for conscience' sake," he would ask, "whom ye have met and succoured since last I saw you?"

Then the head man of the tribe would answer: "John Faa, we saw Gilbert Raith and two men of the Wanderers in a moss-hag on the Fell of Barullion. Yesterday at morning it was, and we waited long, for the men were reading in their books. Then we went down, and they welcomed us for the breakfast we gave them, and the warm drop out of the bottle. For 'tis limp and drenched

they were, poor things, with the dews of the night and the dampness of their beds. It is a strange thing, John Faa, that they who are so holy know not what we pagans learn as bairns—how to dwell among the heather, and yet keep bien and healthy and hearty all the while, with routh of good meat to eat and no man the worse. But the Wanderers are a feeble and feckness folk who cannot look after themselves, and expect nothing better than the 'Ready—present—fire!' which they mostly do hear at last from Lag or John Graham."

So Silver Sand and Juliana would carry away with them such information as would have set the Privy Council of the Persecutors sitting at Edinburgh to doubling its riders and enforcing its dragonnades. But when they did find them they were sorely thinned companies, on whom the winds of adversity had blown, biting them to the bone. Some of them Silver Sand had seen before on his previous wanderings.

On Cree moss they crossed the little band who followed the Black McMichael, whose voice had been so long heard in the house conventicles of Kilbride:

"Clear in the closing strain."

A hasty man, violent of hand, vehement of tongue was McMichael, but with the heart of a child they found him. And as soon as he knew that Silver Sand had been put to the horn along with Sir Andrew Agnew for the killing of the two soldiers at the "Rowan Tree" Inn, he spoke out all the sorrow of his heart.

"It matters little in town and populous places when or how a man is taken. There is a funeral with solemn observances and the consoling word of a minister. But here on the wild moors we ascend every rising ground with hearts that sink and flutter. What or who shall we find at the top? The wide moss, the level moor are like the sea. One man can see another for miles, and

though we can beat them at the hiding game, they take us at last.

"Only yesterday my nephew, Rob, left our poor castle here on the Clints of Dromore. We have kept close in and about it for nigh on eighteen months, and we have never crossed any dangerous man, except one of the barefoot harvesting Irishry, who cursed us for 'sour-faced Whigs' and 'canting long-cloaks' when we could give him no brandy but only poor ale and not much of that. But there was no harm in the wild creature, for he laid no information, and we were not disquieted on account of him.

"But yesterday Rob went to dig some of our little patches of potatoes in the hidden nooks, and what the folk here call 'lazy-beds'—which for a year or two flourish abundantly among the mossy soil, but after that do not so well but go back to the heather. So down in the hollow of the Little Fleet, Rob my nephew went to dig, whistling 'Martyrs' between his teeth and his heart free as a young kid. He came not back at midday, which is meal time, and late in the afternoon we began to say among ourselves that surely Rob had found the crop heavy, and that he would need a help home with his sackful of the kindly fruits of the earth.

"So I went in search of Rob, my brother's son, and I had it in my mind to *tance* him soundly, if he had gone to sleep behind a heather bush. We had grown so well-accustomed that we thought but little of our dangers, the troops keeping mostly to the military road far to the south, or when they searched the heather holding well to the crown of the country, while in either case, we in our nook above the Fleet abode still and tranquil.

"I came to the edge of the heather where it abuts on our lazy-beds, and whistled 'Up wi' the banner o' Blue,' which was our signal. But no sign o' Rob!

" 'Rascal,' I thought, 'he takes after his father. He has tired of the work and gotten into some nook with a

book—that will suit him better than breaking his back sacking those potatoes!'

"And not over well pleased I took a step or two forward, and there in the 'sheuch' (or trench between two beds) lay Rob, fallen forward on his face, his hand still grasping the cross of the spade his bonnet fallen a little off, and his bonny locks that the lasses liked to tug at, red-wet with his blood! They had seen him as they went by and fired a volley without asking a question or putting any test. They had killed him just as if he had been a young crow, to prove their pieces and their marksmanship. Thus is Scotland, or at least all the South and West of it, governed this day."

Silver Sand looked at Juliana hopelessly, for to cure this bereaved soul was beyond his medicine.

"We buried Rob where he fell on the potato-patch. He could not have been a braver soldier if he had died on the battle-field. And indeed he took his life quite as much in his hand as any hero, and in a better cause than is common.

"But oh, the difference to us! You see we had been together so long, close-nested at night to keep us dry among the rocks—while all day long each man had his task, and now wherever we turn, there is a blank where Rob should have been.

"Often I had reproved him for the singing and whistling of vain tunes, also for the laughter which comes natural to the young, and now when all that had ceased for ever, the very gladness of the world, nay even our confidence in God, built on such wonderful experience, seemed to founder, because He had allowed Rob to fall into the hands of his enemies!"

Yet (such is the strange mixed nature of man) after praying and a long grace said, the Black McMichael and his company, together with Silver Sand and Juliana, sat down and ate heartily of the very potatoes which poor Rob had dug and left in a trail behind him. This troubled

Silver Sand, but after turning it over in his mind he understood that though one man ceases to live, the bodily needs of others—aye, even his nearest and dearest kin, still require to be supplied. Morever, while man is on the earth and not under it, he must be fed with the meat of the body, which is no subaltern, but claims an equal captainship over Life with his immortal part the Soul.

XXVIII

THE TAKING OF SILVER SAND

OCTOBER came, and with it glimpses of steel-blue locks, of rolling leagues of rusty heather, where a month ago the moor had shone, gorgeous as the mantle of Cæsar. The green "awns" became grey, and the gladness went out of the earth. But there were compensations. The days were shorter, but the skies were clearer, crisper, more luminous. The camp-fire, now retired farther under the cliff-edge or deeper into the cavern, glowed with the new lustre and warmth of oncoming winter.

Quiet dwelt among these treeless hills. Juliana and Silver Sand followed the two grey donkeys over the coarse bent grass and turfy heather. Sometimes they saw the sea's blue semicircle glittering in the west, or the Isle of Man hung like a cloud in the southern fairway. Above their heads the wind erected and demolished groined and fluted architecture of cloud, planned and overturned towers of sunlit snow.

They looked out on evenings wild and fiery-splendid, and the very shortness of the time left to them gave an edge to their peace in the enjoyment of Nature—which was the protest of these summer-wanderers against the season when the waters should be as iron and the hills covered down with an equal sheeting of snow.

They reached the Dungeon of Buchan on a stubbornly bitter forenoon of blowing snow from the east, which came up out of the open jaws of the Wolf's Slock in a solid headlong push—like the fall of a wave on a deck, it swept the gorge from end to end. It plastered up the

front windows of the Red Killer's house, and had already rendered exceedingly ill-tempered the temporary occupant thereof—Jasper, the head of the clan Stanley.

"Now't like this were ever seen in Moston Clough," he had been grumbling not a quarter of an hour before their arrival, "fine seasonable weather for the North Pole (if there be such a place) with bears to dance about it like girls on May Day, as they do tell. But this is none good enough for a man who has a fine smithy with three fires and a covered court for shoeing horses all within his own freehold."

But when the two grey asses came in, laden and content, with Silver Sand grave as usual, and Juliana red-lipped and smiling—why, skirmishing hail and volleying snow might fall and beat as they pleased upon the house of the Dungeon. The old man had seen the desire of his heart, and although he should depart, it would be as one who was assured of the happiness of Egypt.

Then how eagerly he showed all the treasure he had gathered in his son's name. So great had been his fervour.

"Them Taidies wad not pay," he explained, "Tom, as fancies hisself upon his fist work, gave back talk—back talk to me, Jasper Stanley o' Moston Clough! By the Boggart-That-Walks, I made him eat his words first and pay his money afterwards. For the power o' the Lord came upon me—I were always somewhat o' a church man, more or less—and aye, lad, I thumped Tom Taidy—I thumped him good. For the good of his soul, I stretched him as often as he would coom to t' scratch. But he tired o' that, though not afore he were a bonny sight. He shook me by the hand forbye, and when I asked him if he were satisfied like, he said he was well satisfied, and so with all the Taidies at his tail he went his way.

"Aye, lass, here is the reckoning by itself, mostly in silver shillings and Spanish dollars, but there are also

two well-grown pigs hanging to the roof in hams, quarters, flitches, gammons, and also puddings black and white. Oh, devil a Taidy could gammon me in a matter of the dues of Egypt. Only it came to this on't, that some o' my lads were that graidly upsot wi' me hevvin' all the good fighting, and not letting them go at the Taidies, as they were planning to do, that I had a kind o' ruction on my hand—so be that I had to fall to and thump Tomat Darby and Gaffer Rowley, as an example of peace and discip*line*. I have my sense o' justice, ye see. For sez I, 'Ye shall not fall upon the Taidies, ye shanna' take their cuddies that are but poor things anyway. The Taidies are of the blood, though not the pure Black Blood, and so long as I am doing justice for my son and daughter, Egypt shall not spoil Egypt. Besides they have paid their dues and Tom Taidy has been thumped most wholesome!'

"'Aye,' says they, 'he has been thumped. We knaws that, but where do we come in—what has our share been, answer us that, Jasper Stanley?'

"And I answered them cleanly, 'You come in here. I will give ye your share, money down!' sez I. So I thumped Tomat Darby again, and to content all the world I roughly-handled half-a-dozen Stanleys, and sent Roy Rice and Supple Sylvester skipping among the rocks to keep out o' my gate. Ah, a man that is a chief, must knaw how to hold his folk in order like!"

Jasper Stanley had proved a most efficient keeper of the castle, and supplies both of money and provender were sent off to the new Gled's Nest, and to Mr. Walter Dunning sitting faithfully over his Bible and his Virgil in the Doocot itself, nursing the hope of better days over a fire of driftwood and the smoulder of dried seaweed.

Jasper Stanley, having insisted upon rendering the detailed account of his stewardship to his daughter Juliana, and having vaunted, as well he might, of the well-stocked beef barrels, meal-arks, and mutton-hams for

the winter (in addition to Taidy's pigs before mentioned), was induced to stay on a little that he might partake of the good spell of weather which is always expected in Scotland in early November.

More than that the bands of Lag and Windram were reaching ever farther and farther up into the hill country and driving the Wanderers deeper and deeper into the wilderness of the upper lochs from Enoch and McKitterick even to the old walls of Doon. The Glenkens men were now feeling the push so much that they were no longer safe among the lirks of green Cairsmuir or in the dens of Garpel and Garryhorn. They set forth across the wilderness towards the central boss where, till now, the red of the King's coat and the trampling of his horses had never come.

John Faa gave them help and shelter, and set the McKitterick's men who knew the wilds to construct them some shelters against the bitter season which must soon come over the uplands.

They were good men and loyal to their belief, but being of the Glenkens they brought with them a certain assertive hardness and even quarrelsomeness to which Mr. Dunning and the folk of Cree and Trool had not been accustomed.

Silver Sand refused no man shelter. He sent none back to those dangerous glens where Lag's roysterers and Claverhouse's troopers were waiting for them, with musket primed and firing parties picked.

Still he was perfectly aware that he was bringing infinitely greater danger upon himself and his people. The refugees had left friends and dependents across the long ridge of Millyea and the Kells Range. Letters and communications must needs pass. Provisions would be hastened across, and the spies from the enemy's headquarters at Garryhorn, well placed for such work, would certainly track them at the last.

They blessed him, these hoary-headed elders and

snowy-haired ministers who had made up the famous godly fellowship known as the Covenant of Auchinskeoch—Gillespies and Lauries, Fishers, Thomsons, and McNeils.

"Sir hearken to me," said the ousted minister of Kells to Silver Sand, "we are a trial to you, and more than a trial, a danger. But because you have been sorry for us, the least of His little ones, you shall receive ten fold in the Day of Judgment, the reward we are too poor to offer you in this life!"

* * * * *

News arrived regularly from the school-house of Leswalt and if all was not duly received it was not the fault of old Nathan Crogo, Dominie, who, as the winter closed in and the Atlantic gusts blew more fierce and chill, shut his storm shutters earlier, lighted his candle, drew in his table near the fire of peat and bog oak, and so having mended his goosequill, fell to it.

It was to him the sweetest hour of all the day, and the hens among the smoky "baulks" chuckled sleepy approval as he laid sheet to sheet. He had a great sheepskin coat down to his heels, this dominie, the leather softly tanned and the wool inside. Sir Andrew had brought it all the way from Paris, but being a great out-of-doors fiery furnace of a man, he had soon tired of it, and so had given it to one who was his good friend and servitor.

And surely the dominie was grateful. For, though a fair trencherman and upon good terms with his stomach for one of sedentary habits, he had never been very strong all the days of him, but lived always in some dread of the advent of Winter in his icy jerkin.

The dominie set the supper-pot to simmer with what was left of the noonday rabbit, mixed with good soup, thickened with potato, carrot, and all manner of good dried beans and peas, so that as he wrote the savoury

smell came in cheerful whiffs to his nostrils as the escaping steam lifted the lid.

Not much of Lilias, and that little casually, did he write, sprinkled with care like a rare condiment. Much of my Lady and her anxiety for the return of Sir Andrew, and a great deal of James, now duly married to Mary Montgomerie, and dwelling rather uncertainly at Innermessan, but ever in fear of the tramp of horses and the midnight summons. Probably, however (the dominie sagely averred), his father-in-law, the Earl of Eglinton, had spoken a word for his daughter's young husband, or, having missed the old cockbird, the Grahams were content to let the young brood alone.

Their time would come surely when Sir Andrew was taken, or else slept with his fathers, but in the meantime James and his Mary had peace under the tiled roof of Innermessan.

In the South-west about this time the persecutors grew more desperate and sullen. Things were not going too well in Edinburgh. Men of the King's religion (which is to say plain Papist) were lording it at the Council Board. The Earl of Perth had recanted, and built himself a chapel in which to say Mass. The city mob, always the wildest in the kingdom, rose to tear mass-hearer and chapel to pieces, and it took all the soldiers within call to hold them in check.

But in the two halves of Galloway, and especially in the Stewartry or Eastern portion, the hand of the oppressor lay the more sullenly heavy. They were unquiet. They knew that they had filled their cups almost to the brim, and judging by themselves, they expected no mercy when their time came, and the men of the Covenants should have their day.

As the mosses hardened that bitter winter of the final fury of the ungodly, Claverhouse shook himself clear of Edinburgh Privy Council, and acted as his own cruel heart bade him. Ten thousand Killicrankie deaths shall

not wipe out the stain of the blood which he caused to bespatter the South and West, but especially Galloway, and far into the centuries his name shall be accursed. He may have been beautiful as Lucifer, whom good Master Milton has pictured forth for us, but he showed himself still more heartless and evil. We of Galloway shall teach the doings of that fair face and that black heart to our children's children far down through the generations. But I divaginate. I am recounting a history. Well, then, to it!

Horses were shod all about the moors as soon as ever the frost should cause the lochs and bogs to harden. Lag, Bruce, Westerhall, the Morton Douglases—all the troops in position were ready to obey the master mind.

Claverhouse had his quarters mostly alone in Dumfries. He dwelt apart, a superior fiend, loving not to chamber with Westerhalls and Mortons, nor to sit long about the roaring board with Bruce and Windram.

All the same he saw that every man was at his post, and with the falling of the frost, he ordered the great sweeping movement which was to envelop all the fastnesses of Gollaway and southern Ayrshire.

The muskets rattled from hill to hill, and the fugitives fell like moor fowl, prone and bleeding on the rusty heather. As the fan-shaped troop moved away, a humane or careful sergeant stayed behind with a pair of pistols to give the *coup de grace* where the muskets had failed—which was not often, for the men had grown expert from much practice.

The troop which owned Douglas of Morton for its chief had been the latest formed, and its captain was eager for distinction. Grier of Lag held the record for indiscriminate slaughter, but he would often spend time on private feuds. Under cloud of night he had stolen by dim moorland tracks upon Bell of Whiteside, and in the dawning had shot him because he was a relative of my Lord Kenmure. But Morton had come straight from

his keep among the Queensferry fells and knew nothing of distinctions. He shot for the bag.

The names of certain men were given to him. He would seek these out and kill them. If he made a mistake, it was no great matter—there would be no outcry about one Whiggish malcontent the less. Besides very probably the fellow deserved shooting quite as much as the other.

So all the way up the Moss of Cree till he could turn off towards the deep-set Loch of Trool, Morton and his men made their way. They slew a Steel of Lesmahagow, who was found in a widow's house. At the gable end by the peat stack they shot him blindfolded, and threatened to do the like with the woman, but passed on into the wild country because there was no time to be lost.

It was the greying of the afternoon when they came over the rig of the Loch Valley, following the white curves of the Gairland Burn. Silver Sand was on his way back from carrying provisions to a cave on the south-looking face of the Merrick where Barbour of the Brae and Semple of Rig were in special hiding. They were being sought for everywhere, because the death of the Curate of Carsephairn was (quite erroneously) laid to their charge.

Silver Sand was spied so near their cave mouth that he could not slip back without revealing their whereabouts. At the worst, he said to himself, I have a better chance than they. So he pushed straight on to where Morton was riding at the head of his troop, and saluted with his plumed hat sweeping the heather.

Morton, a rough tyke enough, shaggy as a Scaur Water collie, looked him up and down. He took in the details of the costume. The French clothes of the newest and finest material, braided by Tailor Byron after the pattern of my Lord's in which he went to London, might be a little out of date to a city eye, accustomed to the

coffee-houses, but they were of a marvellous freshness on the side of the Merrick.

"Who may you be? Stand up and give an account of yourself to His Majesty's officer." Morton's voice was not quite so loud as usual. He was a little anxious to know with whom he had to do.

"My name is John Percy Faa," said Silver Sand. "I am here on the business of my people. I am an Earl of this kingdom of Scotland by the creation of James the First, and a cousin of his Grace the Duke of Northumberland, whose name I bear."

"I tell you, sir, you may be all you say, and yet you fall under my jurisdiction. Will you take the Test?"

"As often as you like," said Silver Sand. "I was bred of the King's religion."

"A lie—a lie—!" cried a little foxy man running up from the rear of the column, fumbling all the while with his side wallet of notary's leather. "I have his name, notification, and description. This is none other than John Faa the gipsy, attainted with the death of Ellerton and Kidney, art and part with the Prophet Peden, and the very man who snatched Sir Andrew Agnew out of our hands and set him on the high seas!"

XXIX

JULIANA IN PURSUIT

THERE was a movement of surprise among the troop and the firing party looked significantly to the priming of their pieces. But Sergeant Donellan, who commanded them, scrutinised with well-trained plunderer's instinct the pearl clusters at the wrists of Silver Sand's shirt and the golden buttons on his coat. These should be his perquisite—that is, unless the Captain should take them to deliver to the Privy Council as proof of indemnity. Already he had lost half-a-dozen signet rings and gold snuff-boxes in this way—losses which made of Sergeant Donellan almost a rebel at heart.

Captain Douglas of Morton stood reflecting, in so far as his dull brain and muddled intelligence permitted that exercise. It might be dangerous to shoot a man who claimed kinship with an English Duke. It might be still worse to prevent the Privy Council from bringing its potent engines of discovery to bear upon a man who, if the Deil's Rattlebag spoke truth, carried the key to a hundred mysteries in his bosom. He was new to the service, and not having proved himself, did not stand high in the esteem of Clavers.

On the whole it was better not to shoot the fellow out of hand. He would meet Windram at the shieling of Loch Dee that night. Windram was the fellow. He was Claverhouse's senior Captain, and the most trusted. He would truss the gipsy earl (if so he were, which seemed not likely), and Windram would counsel him what to do with him.

But as he rode on with Silver Sand well guarded in the

midst, Captain Douglas had no idea of how the country was rising behind him. Fifty minutes after his arrest news had been brought to Juliana, who, her work being done for the day, was busy with the issue of *Chamberlain's State of Scotland* for the current year. Juliana was eager to improve her mind, and the books she read were serious. Indeed, no others could be got in Scotland for love or money. Pitscottie's Chronicle was her handbook, and a French manual of universal history in a huge folio helped her to remember whether the Romans or the Greeks came first.

But now, at the news of the diaster, she let her book drop and stood for a minute pale as the snow, which at that altitude was already licking the windows.

She was ready to save him, but a troop of regular sodliers was a serious matter for a tribe of half-armed and quite untrained hill gipsies to attack. She felt the want of the Red Killer at such a juncture.

Bred among the hills he would have known where to fall on the straggling march of the troopers, as had already been successfully done at the head of the pass of Enterkin.

But an awful fear smote her. The troop of horse were not taking prisoners, only shooting as they went. Perhaps at that very moment—! And as she saw the picture of Silver Sand lying dead with the snow thinly sprinkled on his face—all her soul went forth in one cry of anger and vengeance.

At least, if that were so, she and all who should cleave to her would fight to the death to avenge him. She soon had her Stanleys ready, with Tomat Darby, and all the Rices, Rowleys and Sylvesters of fighting age. The Faas also could be counted upon to retake their chief. But they were but poor shots, and might well do as much harm as good. The McKittericks were eager to serve as guides and advisers, but the absence of their chieftain slackened the bonds of discipline among them, and

Juliana could see their women bidding them be careful not to mix themselves up with the quarrels of others.

"This is your quarrel," she cried, when the caution came to her ear. "John Faa is your king—your overlord. He is in the hands of his enemies. If the Red Killer were here no man among you would dare hold back for a moment. And when he comes, he shall know the names of the laggards!"

This brought them out, but by force as it were, and not over willingly. Only Juliana was so fierce, so tall, so terrible, that in an hour she seemed to have added a cubit to her stature.

No man dared to withstand her to her face. She would have slain him on the spot. She caused even that stout old fighter her father to quail, by the despair that had gathered in her eyes.

The troop of horse was following the southern verge of the Loch of Dee when the hill gipsies came pouring down towards their quarry. Ah, if only Juliana could have kept them in order and restraint as Silver Sand would have done!

The gipsies slid behind stones and heather bushes, but their fowling pieces were next to useless, save a few, carefully preserved, which belonged to the Lancashire lads. Egypt preferred to settle its quarrels with the steel. What then could they do against carbine and long-sword, armed as they were only with knives!

It was in noways courage which they lacked. But professional soldiers, counted with the *Maison du Roy* of the French King, and the Scotch Dutch regiments to be the best in Europe—the odds were long against them! What wonder that the McKittericks hesitated and that even the Stanleys needed leading! If time had been given to raise the Cameronian Society men as was done somewhat later, in the Revolution year, there might have been a chance. And worst of all, no one knew where a court martial might be formed—probably as soon as

Morton was joined by another detachment of the "sweepers" of the moorland. Then it would be short shrift and a dozen bullets for the gipsy chief. For though the dream of Silver Sand was now fulfilled, and King James sat in his brother's seat, the milder days of the Toleration were slow of coming in Galloway, for the heart of Claverhouse was bitter within him that so much good gear should slip through his fingers.

XXX

CLATTERINGSHAWS

JULIANA, for the purposes of her campaign and to save her husband, had donned her young gallant's suit, which she had cleaned and pressed on her return from Lochnaw with her husband. She was not very clear as to what she should do for him, but it was obvious from the temper of her followers that an open attack was out of the question.

Her father, stout old frog-eyed blacksmith, would have risked a rush—and perhaps Tomat Darby with one or two of the real "Owdham" lot would have followed. But Juliana knew that this was merely throwing away the lives of brave men because they were brave and felt their kinship to herself. Their deaths would neither benefit her husband nor influence his fate, except to make it more sure and immediate.

Prisoners who gave no trouble, sometimes owing to rank or circumstances and sometimes to gifts of money, found their way to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh. But any attempt at rescue, if not immediately successful, merely caused them to be shot out of hand to save further trouble.

So far as a man unlearned in the ways of women can make out, Juliana had some vague idea of surrendering herself to the Captain of the troops, and claiming that she alone was guilty in the matter of the two soldiers Ellerton and Kidney. She would take over the Red Killer's story and make herself the hero of it. She would describe the sword-and-dagger fight in the angle of the old sheep-ree.

In this way she might hope to assure her husband of freedom, as there were no other grounds on which he could be held a prisoner. I should not venture this guess, being, as you know, but an old dominie with his mind more apt for Terance and Plautus than for penetrating the secret heart of a young girl. But I have a reason for my daring—which is that Mistress Lilias, my well-loved friend and pupil (for so she signs herself) has deigned to signify that she agrees with me in this interpretation of Juliana's motives at this time. Nothing is likely to be clearer, so that we may take it that Juliana was travestied in masculine attire for the purpose of offering herself up instead of her husband.

Looked at calmly after so many years, there is little doubt that such a project was chimerical and fore-doomed to failure. Juliana would have lost her life without altering the fate of John Faa, who was accused by the small busy practitioner called the "Deil's Rattlebag" of conveying Sir Andrew Agnew out of the country—a defeat which, in the eye of the Grahams, was worth a hundred such obscure lives as those of John Faa the gipsy and Juliana Stanley.

What is certain is that she followed closely the march of the squadrons. It was easy to escape detection, for the soldiers did not look behind them, nor survey the ground over which they had just passed their besom. John Faa rode on a raw-boned grey mare, no doubt taken from some hill farmer's stable, all shaggy about the fetlocks and hoary with age from nose to eyebrow.

Juliana could see him quite well. He was bound, but his guards did not seem to be in any way severe. On the contrary, all six of them took turns to ride by his side and talk with him.

So they made their way to Loch Dee, and at the little herd's shieling on the southerly slope, a rough camp follower of Windram's was waiting for them.

"You are to go and meet the Captain at the change

house of Clatteringshaws which is on the New Galloway track. We are all to go post haste to the south—I do not know wherefore, but there is to be no more of this moorland work!"

And as he spoke Silver Sand turned hastily round to question him, but the guards thinking that he meant to escape, pointed their pieces at his breast and bade him stand and be silent.

Clatteringshaws is a little low-browed house by the wayside—as it were, forgotten in that great solitude. Properly speaking it ought to be tenanted only by the peewits and wild fowl of the moors, and the shy dun deer in times of storm. But as a matter of fact during all these stirring days it was a flourishing change-house kept by Kirsty Jardine, a stout, florid, fair-headed Annandale woman, who declared herself wedded and as such wore a ring, but had neglected to bring her husband along with her. This, however, rather increased her popularity among the marching details and scouting troops who formed her principal clientèle in the bad days when the Blue Flag of the Covenants was trailed in the dust.

Kirsty was of the Border, and had none of the tenderness of conscience and scrupulosity of action which were characteristic of Galloway good wives even when they kept inns or change-houses for a livelihood. Her house was full on the main road or more exactly military bridle-path between the clachans of Creebrig and Minnigaff on the West, and the burgh of Newton Galloway on the East. By going still farther on you would come out upon Moniaive, Sanquhar, or Drumlanrig, at all of which were strong garrisons of King's men, brought thither for the brave sport of the Whig hunting.

With infinite patience and caution the McKitterick light infantry skirmished about the flank of the heavy troopers of Captain Morton. He also heard with relief of the rendezvous on the New Galloway road. By starting early that was within a long day's ride of his own keep on

the bonny hawthorn-covered knowes above Thornhill and Durisdeer.

The McKittericks had no mind to engage the troopers of the King. They were wild people who had not yet lost their respect for muskets and the marvel of shod horses. When a shot went off from one of their old brass-bound blunderbusses, they gave three cheers and congratulated the marksman. But it never struck them to go and look for the game. So the soldiers' carbines, which actually killed men at twenty paces and more, were wonderful to them, and such a death had something of wizardry about it in no ways natural or canny.

Nevertheless, the McKittericks were incomparable scouts. None in Scotland could touch them, and the heavier Stanleys, accustomed to the limestone plateaus of Lancashire and the ribbed wolds of Yorkshire, kept well behind, following the indication of a waved hand or a beckoning finger as the hill gipsies pushed forward, secure in their invisibility.

The great flats of the lower Cooran and the upper Dee Water were already hard bound by frost. So the big men on the big cavalry horses mostly passed cleanly over. Now one and then another would break through, amid shouts of laughter from their comrades, but though a fall or two took place, nothing more serious than jest and nicknames resulted.

As they came eastward they began to catch glimpses of the few stunted shelter trees planted about Clatteringshaws Inn to break the winds of the west, which in that exposed region swept over the face of the moorland with a fury inexpressible. The north wind might, as in the ballad, tear the bent. But here, the west wind, sweeping across those winter plateaus almost uprooted the little low-set inn and damaged its many outhouses. To combat this Mistress Kirsty Jardine had laid broad flat stones along all her roofs of thatch, binding them down with

tarred ropes anchored to great boulders brought long ago from the granite hills.

The hostelry of Clatteringshaws was well seen from far—a long low sad-coloured range of buildings, then in good condition, but now when last I passed sorely fallen into dis-repair—much of it indeed carted away to make dykes—but the outlines of its past glories still plain in ruined walls and extensive foundations.

Be sure the keen eyes of the gipsies were on the outlook to make out what number of enemies was to meet them there. If Captain Windram had his officers with him to make the legal quorum of five, it was probable that John Faa would be put through the semblance of a trial, and shot on the spot. It was before this tribunal that (as the Lady Lilias and I both think) Juliana had resolved to attempt to substitute herself for her husband.

Gradually the grey walls grew out of the grey wilderness. The stones on the roof and the black tarry cables seemed to anchor it down to the waste of heather and tufty gall-bushes which grew right up to the narrow windows. But no riot of tippling soldiery could be seen anywhere about as, following the troop, the gipsies carefully approached.

The McKittericks redoubted a surprise, until one of their swift-foot scouts, having taken the face of the south-looking hills opposite to the inn's main door, came racing back to report that only half-a-dozen horses were tethered at the main door of Kirsty's. A soldier was on faction there, for the glint of his musket barrel could be seen, and still more clearly the flash as of lightning on the sword bayonet then newly served out to the troops.

So there was a real rendezvous after all, and the soldiers of Morton's troop, all newly raised men, looked to their accoutrements and pulled their belts tighter that they might make an appearance before the veterans of Captain Windram.

There was much dressing of lines and ordering of the

files on the more level ground as they approached. The sergeants swore under their breaths and the Captain rode a little ahead to give them freedom of prophesy. For he knew that in matters of drill and discipline he was in their hands.

So it came about that the prisoner, with only two men of his escort, was left to follow behind. The rest of Morton's command was ordered to take their places in the troop, that Captain Windram might find nothing to report against them the next time he foregathered with Colonel Graham.

As the troop came closer and the road from the Bridge of Cree was seen wimpling and knotting itself across the wilderness like an endless serpent, half a dozen men came out of the inn and began hastily to mount their horses. They were not even seriously touched with liquor, which in such a lonely place showed only one thing, to wit, that they were under a strong commander who knew how to keep his men well in hand.

As the troops which had so long been crossing the frozen bog debouched into the comparative open of the well-trod path, a tall soldierly man came out in full uniform and vaulted into the saddle. The man at the horse's head saluted and Captain Windram rode forward alone to meet his junior Morton.

He did not waste any time in greetings, but called out while he was yet a score of paces off in the loud raucous voice of the habitual drinker, "'Tis all up, Morton—no more riding for us in Scotland! We are wanted in England, where we shall be safer, at any rate."

"Why, man, what's the matter?" cried Morton, as they ranged up alongside, the head gear of their horses clanking, and the two beasts trying to bite each other in a friendly manner.

"What's the matter, quotha?" shouted Windram, "curses on the son of the King's father! He is going the

right way to lose his crown and his neck as his father did!"

"What has the King done?"

"His Papist cabal—Jesuits and placemen—has caused him to send down an indulgence to all dissenters, and what is worse, a pardon to all offenders; and I not yet infefted in the lands of Arioland which were promised me when I took Gordon of Earlston and carried him to Edinburgh. Curses on the black Papist croakers, say I! I meant to reform and live cleanly—blood me, if I did not! Marry perhaps. I had my eye on a beauty and a heiress, the Lady Lilias of Lochnaw. Her uncle would have dowered her well if I had made his peace. And now it is back again to riding and roystering, only in England this time mark you, where they will cashier a man for a whimsy which goes unnoticed here."

"But what matters an Indulgence less or more?" said Douglas, "we have had such before by dozens, but they never altered our practice."

"Maybe not, Morton," retorted the grizzled veteran of many wars and a thousand punch bowls, "but you will find this difference. We have always had the best legal talent in the country to show us how to override the Acts of Parliament and royal proclamations. But this time the Privy Council is filled with Papists, and Sir George is down—outcasted—broken like a pewter pot!"

"What, not Sir George Mackenzie?"

"Who else? There are not two like him, and guess you whom they have set over us as King's advocate?"

"I cannot guess!"

"Oh, a friend of yours—one that will not forget you—no other than my Lord Stair's son—slippery Johnnie. And our heads are all in the sack if he gets his way with us. It is done with the Grahams in Galloway. Agnew will be back again in his sheriffdom, and instead of hunting, we shall be the hunted."

"What is to be done, Windram—tell me and I shall do it!"

"It depends whether you mean to stick to the soldier's trade, or let it go hang. For me I have no choice. I ride to Dumfries to confer with Claverhouse. Then I shall take my men by forced marches to Hounslow Heath to overawe the burgesses of London. That is where the King wants us. He throws Scotland over, with all who have fought for him and his house for twenty years, with no more feeling than if he cast a pair of old shoes out at the window at Whitehall—bishops, soldiers, lawyers, every man who has earned a nation's hatred by doing his dirty work—he casts them off with the true Stuart gratitude."

"I shall stand by him nevertheless," said Morton, after a struggle which was obvious on his face.

"Then you must turn your coat, as my friend Melford did. Only men of the King's religion can now serve the King. It is no matter for me. I should be a Turk to-morrow and pray on a carpet five times a day if any one would double my pay. But you have a castle and an estate. I never could understand what bee stung Westerha' and you to start the soldier's trade. It is different with Claverhouse who was born a soldier, and will die like one. But you with a comfortable downsitting, with rent, beeves, and dairy kine—what do you want raging and raking after these poor devils who will not preach and pray as the King wants them? I tell you what, friend Douglas, take an old friend's advice, go home, marry and multiply. Lag has already gone to earth and Westerha' has made over his troop to me. Let me have yours and I will stand your friend with the King. He is bound to make me a Colonel when I ride into his camp with six or eight hundred hardy men all well mounted."

"I must see John Graham," said Douglas, "I must write Queensberry, my chief and patron."

"You must do neither, Master Captain Douglas of Morton Castle. You must make your own broth out of your own kail, and give me your answer now, for I ride to cross the border to-morrow evening. I have no time to lose—say *Yea* or say *Nay,* only make haste. John Dalrymple is a cunning loon, and if we do not hasten to seek the King's realm of England, there will be a wondrous harvest of hemp spun, twisted, knotted and noosed for our benefit in the land of the Scots."

"I cannot go home without my retainers and tenantry. I dare not. The countryside would rise and tear me to pieces, pretending that I had sold them."

"How many are there of such?"

"Why, six or seven only—let me have them and you may have the troop."

"Done, by the King of Moldiworts. Tell off your Nithsdale varlets."

This Morton did with as much speed as possible, yet not fast enough to satisfy the impetuous Windram, eager for his course to the south.

"A pace to the front, all Morton's Nithside men—dwellers on his estate, who followed him for love—eight. Douglas, go prove them! What, you do not know that man second to the right! Well, he shall ride the triangle for that when I get him to Carlisle. You would cheat me, sirrah—ah, would you? Seize him, you there to the left!"

The threatened man, who like most of the troop had heard the whole conference of their officers, suddenly swung his heavy charger about and burst through the ranks. He had been one of the two guards left behind to look after Silver Sand, and in a moment the whole command was in confusion. The deserter broke back along the waste through which they had come, and Silver Sand's mare seeing her stable companion put to a gallop turned also and followed closely.

Whereupon ensued confusion and pursuit, and before

Windram could bring up his few veterans, half-a-dozen of Morton's command were riding off in different directions like sparks driven from hot iron by the forgehammer.

In a moment Silver Sand was conscious that some one was running alongside, cutting his bonds as he went.

"Now, when we come to yon willow clump, slip down off the beast on the far side, and leave the rest to me!"

In the light trim figure running so swiftly Silver Sand recognised Julius of the days of Lochnaw.

"Juliana!" he exclaimed.

"Hush," she answered, "not a word. Keep your head well down close to the mane. Now off with you!"

And the next moment Silver Sand found himself, a little stiff, but safe, in the hands of the McKitterick guides, while Juliana, erect in her saddle, was riding along the flank of the disordered column to draw off the enemy's pursuit.

XXXI

JULIANA ASCENDS MOUNT PLEASANT

A JOYOUS rout it was which brought the chief home to the House of the Dungeon. All across the wild frozen moor of Buchan, they had given free vent to their rejoicings. Only Juliana, riding by Silver Sand's side, was strangely silent.

"You are not hurt?" he enquired anxiously, "surely you are not hurt?"

Always with a gentle smile she told him "no." She was only too happy to talk, she said. She had gone out white-faced and hopeless, ready to throw herself before the slayers of her man. She came back quiet and content. She had saved him. No bullet had touched her, and she was still riding the mare on which he had been tied so shamefully, his feet drawn tight with a cart rope beneath the beast's belly.

Yes, it was true, shots had been fired at her. She had heard the whistle of the bullets as she rode. But none had touched her. The whole command of King's men was in an uproar and she could see one of the officers (Windram to a certainty) laying lustily about him with the flat of his sword. He saw his colonelcy vanishing with the fleeing troopers of Morton's half-baked command. He threatened death, with hell following after, against every deserter. He cursed and smote till he had instilled some semblance of order into the troop which he had taken over at so cheap a rate. But it may well be questioned if he succeeded in bringing two-thirds of them to Claverhouse's headquarters at the Brigend of Dumfries.

The gipsies came to the Dungeon head in a tumult of singing. The torches were lit at the Shieling of Glenhead, and the last of the journey had to be performed under hurried glimpses of a moon hidden among snow clouds, or, in the rifts of the black sky, the sudden radiance of a star.

Silver Sand spoke time and again to Juliana, and she answered him softly like one in a dream. She had done her work far above her thought, and now she went back in a kind of ecstasy, a joy that was too deep for expression. As they passed Cameron's grave by the upper lochside the mare stumbled on the ridge of the mound, and Silver Sand, having bidden a sheltie to be saddled, set her upon it sideways, having first quadrupled the cloth under the pad. Then he walked all the way by her side, his arm about her waist and she looking down upon him with eyes of dumb and lovely yearning.

Thus they came to the House of the Dungeon of Buchan, and there, at the entrance of the rocky gorge, they met the master of these solitudes, the Red Killer himself, newly lighted down from the long cross-country journey from the Gled's Nest on the Black Shore of Leswalt.

He took but a look at Juliana's face as she slid down fainting at her husband's feet—another at the concerned and puzzled countenance of Silver Sand.

"God, man, did ye not see? Do you tell me that you did not know?"

The blankness of his chief's regard answered him.

"Run, you young imps," he shouted fiercely to the nearest underlings, "bring Elspeth McKitterick from the 'Star,' and if you are not back in sixty minutes, I shall break every bone in your worthless bodies. Hear me, you Angus, and you Hector, take your feet to it going, but coming back, see that the good wife rides. Tire down a mount and catch another, but get her here!"

And before midnight of that winter night, Silver Sand's

first-born son lay within Juliana's folding arms, and between sleeping and waking, out of the great peace, she watched him by the flickering of the red peat fire, while without the snow made rage among the cliffs of the Dungeon.

Dazed and tremulous of soul Silver Sand sat by the window looking out into the night. The good wife of the "Star" would not let him come near the bed, though he had been allowed to view the boy. But he knew that on Juliana's face there appeared at intervals a rare joy, the enlightenment of one who has found a final peace.

Elspeth of the "Star" said little. But she spoke once at the door to the Red Killer, and the minute after the noise of men pledging the heir of Egypt sank into stillness as if ashamed.

Presently Juliana whispered to the nurse.

"Let him come near me, where I can see him—close by the bed. It will do me no harm, and I have much to say."

Elspeth of the "Star," not the most commendable or douce of dames in her ordinary life, but now turned to a ministering angel, seeing all things and forestalling all things, conferred apart at the window with her daughter Bess whom she had brought with her. She left the two alone, almost with the delicacy of a gentlewoman, to speak together what was in their hearts.

"Kiss me, my lord," said Juliana, "and pardon me that I hid this thing from you. I meant to tell you. But then our precious time together would have been the shorter. I wanted it long, because I knew it might not come again. Now I have saved your life, my husband, and I have given what men desire, a first-born son! This is he, here on my arm, and his name is John—John Faa—mine and yours, John. No one—no one at all can take that from me. I walk in dark places, but there are two white angels who go with me—two Johns—you and the boy. Kiss me—once again. Your lips are hot,

John—they are flames of fire. Bid the woman put wood on the fire—more and more faggots—peat is too slow. I am cold. Yes, you feel me trembling. Hold me about with your arm. Now again I am warm. Ah, if I fall asleep, do not be afraid. I shall awake, dear. Never fear. Long ago I was all vanity and folly. I took you, because I saw it was my one chance of dreaming a woman's dream, and of loving the greatest of men. And I do not say I am sorry. I have made you love me a little, John Faa? Say it—tell me? And though you have yet fifty years to live (as you will have, my husband), you will never forget Juliana, the mad girl who laid aside modesty and 'asked' you, and whom you married out of pity."

Silver Sand groaned aloud in the agony of his spirit.

At the sound the elder of the two women came hastily from the stormbeaten window. Juliana motioned her off with her hand, smiling all the time that inscrutable new smile. "Let us talk, I am well, Aunt Elspeth, and John's arm helps me bravely. There is nothing in the world like a man's arm when that man is the husband of your youth—Elspeth, have you not found it so?"

Now in her heart, Elspeth, wife of the "Star," thought there was a word to say against as well as for that proposition. But she was a wise woman, and knew that the present was not the time to say it. She only nodded and went below stairs to compound a soothing potion of which she foresaw that her patient would presently have need.

So with Silver Sand's arm about her Juliana talked low and triumphantly. But oftentimes she would entangle her ideas, as an angler does his hook among the lily roots at the corner of a pool where the fishes slip past, cool and safe, and the clear brown water eddies away.

Then Silver Sand would touch her cheek with his lips and with one hand ease her pillows, but he dared not move his arm from around her neck.

"I have two good books here," she said, showing him the New Testament and another. "I learned in it from a man who used to bide with us in Moston Clough. Bunyan was his name—John also, and he gave me this and bade me read it. Also he had written with his own hand the wanderings of a man who left home for religion's sake—a kind of Wanderer, as I judge. I did not know what religion was, but the tinker taught me. He told me that these two books would keep me safe till I met the Man-That-Was-To-Be, and then I should forget all for that man's sake. Oh, how right he was! I have forgotten all but you, but for that God will not deal hardly with me. Many a time, John, when I lay leaning on my elbow and watched you in the day dawning, when the birds were just waking to chirp, I have said, "He is not angry, for He is love. He says so, and if this be not love, sure I am that He will not find it anywhere upon earth! Take the little books, John, and read them sometimes for that Love's sake—for love, as you know and I know, is stronger than death."

The green glass of the windows, brought all the way from France, was blended and hoar with frost and plastered snow. The blast from the Dungeon mouth had blown itself out, and the winds of heaven were hushed and laid.

"It is the Sabbath, John," she said, clinging to him, "surely it is the Sabbath day. I can hear the church bells ringing. I used to hear them in Moston Clough and steal away to service unbeknown to father. For it is very well for a man to lightly hold such things, but with a girl it is different. So I loved Sunday morning when Parson Elmes had a service at six of the clock and the men slept late. Breakfast was not till eight—sometimes half an hour later, and then there was plenty of time to get back with a handful of blooms all wet with dew, to make believe you had been down the dell flower gathering."

Silver Sand did not interrupt her, but let her talk on.

"You are different, John, and I should have spoken earlier. I have heard you talk of holy things with holy men, and though you seldom agreed, you reverenced. I have seen you take off your plumed hat (and how noble you looked) when they prayed to their God."

Then she appeared to be wandering a little, and spoke of the Duchrae Bank and Mount Pleasant, mixing them with the tinker's book about Delectable Mountains, and calling them the fairest spots on earth.

"I have made the fire, John," she whispered, "we shall have a sweet camp, on a knowe all flowers, sheltered by the hill pines, and the white water lilies sleeping not a stone's cast from our feet. There we shall rest and spend the Sabbath. I like the country far inland better than the noisy sea, which breaks and lashes and roars the same way Sunday and Saturday. We are out of the gloomy noise of waves among caves. The sad moor-birds cry not here. Only the birds sing, and with our love so wonderful and rich, but oh, so swift to run away —we can rest, all this day and to-morow—and the day after—well, the day after—that is in the hands of God."

And so indeed was the morrow in so far as Juliana was concerned. Silver Sand was left alone with his first-born son. For Juliana, his wife, had fared forth, content and triumphant, full of joy, and carrying her love with her by way of Mount Pleasant into the purple-stained Sabbath of those who have suffered and conquered for love's sake.

XXXII

THE QUEEN OF EGYPT THE LITTLE

THEY buried her in a sunny dale by the waterside of Enoch, just where a burn tinkles away half hidden among the heather. The snow was not all melted yet, but the spot was sheltered and the frost had not bitten deep. The sparkling white of fresh fallen snow marked all the precipices of the Merrick, and outlined the black arrogance of its Spear, to which, because of its steepness, no snow clung. The red-eyed smith had worked day and night to make from bog oak, iron and copper, a fitting coffin for his daughter, and Elspeth of the "Star" had carried the babe home to nurse. Her eldest daughter, Bess, had a child of four weeks, but Bess was so robust that she had milk for them both. John Faa would be satisfied. She was not one to mislippen a beggar's brat, still less the descendant of kings, the true black blood of Egypt.

And Elspeth herself squared many a doubtful item in her account by the kindness of her thought—the heaped-up linen and lace which she brought from the "Star" to deck out the dead for the burying. Juliana lay like something hardly of earth, so refined and frail, all the baser parts of humanity drained away by the great accomplishing act of completed love, which is maternity, that those who looked on her, rough men and simple untaught women, thought that they, when their time came, would not be loth to die.

Silver Sand mused upon life and death. New visions

of love and its meaning came to him. He understood for the first time all the unselfishness of Juliana, and, manlike, wished her alive that he might "make it up to her." Deep in his heart he was aware that though his years might stretch out like those of any patriarch on the roster of noble names, though time and fate should give him the best the world held, he would never be so loved again, with such innocent abnegation and full surrender Her hands were still clasped as they had been about his neck. No one had been able to unclasp them. The loving dead resisted, and so they let her go to her grave with love-locked fingers, a sweet resolute soul steeped in joy, with the tender smile of a sainted love upon her lips.

A year ago she had only been rather a wild gipsy maiden, racing with the colts and uncommonly masterful with the lads. And love had wrought this marvel—a woman sainted, frailty-freed, and leading even bad, rough women, not free from reproach, upward to the Unknown God, by the gentle path which is service and love and happy death.

The gypsies sang the old hymns and laments for their Saint Sara, that handmaiden of Mary Madeleine who lies cloistered in the low crypt of Les Trois Maries on the Provencal beach amid the scent of tufted romarin and the hale herbs of that lonely foreshore:

"The tree and the cross of Sara the Saint,
And the Man who hung thereon,
The daughter of Egypt shall see them all,
When her feet touch Mount Sion."

Or again, it was the mysterious call of the Romany for a home, which certainly for him is not of this world, seeing that by his own immemorial choice, he is the world's sole wanderer.

"My blood so red
For thee was shed—
Come home again, come thy ways home!
My own sweet heart, come thy ways home!
Hast gone astray
Out of thy way?
Awell—awell!
Come home again—come thy ways home!"

This was the overword of their song, mingled with the tags of Romany laments and all the wild but not hopeless lament of the Oriental.

But even the immemorial wail of Egypt for their dead queen left Silver Sand cold—cold as the snowflakes which sprinkled them, dusting down from the peaks of the Dungeon.

* * * * *

The Stanleys started for their own land as soon as the mists began to creep up warm and laden with the breath of spring from the sea. The Killer had made sure that they would pass the Border without difficulty, after which they must fend for themselves.

Not a red-coat at Lagwine, at Carlinwark, at Crocketford or even in Dumfries—all (so they said) had gone south to fight the King's battles. He was in sore need, this James of York, and the greater was his need the greater became his folly. They were gone, at all events, like a roosting covey of birds scared by the sudden clapping of hands under the branches. Scotland could hardly believe in her own good fortune, and men talked in whispers and visited each other by night as if they were still in hiding.

And to his host of the Dungeon, the red-eyed smith left a complete set of travelling blacksmith's gear—a treasure almost inestimable in that time and place. Jasper Stanley would find another waiting for him in

the Clough of Moston under the care of Buskar and Jankar, his brawny 'prentices. Yet all the same the deed of gift was a memorable one, and one that the dwellers of the wild speak of to this day. Indeed, it became a custom to send to Jasper and afterwards to his successors, Buskar and Jankar Stanley, a sturdy lad to learn the trade, so that the fame of the hill forge of the Dungeon reached from Cree Water to Kells, and the McKittericks and John Faa, their over-lord, had both siller and renown.

Thus they parted, and Silver Sand went with them to accompany the party as far as the Eden. But the Red Killer, charmed with his bellows and anvil, stayed behind to hammer and weld. For, as the French say, " 'tis only in forging that one becomes a smith."

Little was said. There was little to say. The grave in the sheltered nook above Enoch constantly returned to the thought of both husband and father. The babe she had left hardly counted as yet. That faint gleam of too-early light might any day flicker out like a blown lantern. At any rate, if any could keep him in life, it was the wise woman Elspeth and her daughter, whose fostering care he shared.

For children of Egypt they travelled nobly. Silver Sand had been lavish. He had given to her father the golden pieces which he had had made into hoops for Juliana's splendid blue-black hair. The thick bands of gold-smithery work, old as their first coming into the land, were kept for his young son's wife, if he should live so long. Silver Sand had also bought for them hardy Galloway ponies and noble asses in plenty. He had given them tents and tent equipage, so that the Stanleys should go back to their own land like princes.

A hard grey day it was when they crossed the Dee Water at the Boat Croft a mile below Glenlochar Abbey, where, in the summer season, is a ford. And Conchar McConchie swore to the miller of Barnboard that things

were come to a pretty pass when common gipsies were trigged out like lairds—"Aye, and one o' them sat his horse with the air of a prince!"

"And a prince he was," said Miller Johnstone, who knew something of these matters, "for who was he but John Faa, who is as good an earl of the realm of Scots as Castle Stewart himself!"

The ferryman stared down the road after them, and turned over the crown piece in his hand. Then he crossed himself (being but an Annandale pagan) and spat upon it to keep away ill luck.

"Curse me, if I should not gladly ferry the like of them twice a day across Dee Water. From Claverhouse I never got a nod, though I make twelve journeys with his provender, and as for Westerha', he does nothing but damn me and curse me because my father has not paid his half-year's rent.

They drew near England, passing down the Long Wood of Lochrutton, and so at last losing sight of the white peaks on the northwestern horizon. They ventured the Bridge of Dumfries, passed the Sands in safety and so, skirting the Solway, they came to the lowlands, where already at close of day the ploughman was leaving his plough sidelong-tilted in the last furrow.

On the knowetops they saw snug homesteads fortified with rows of corn-ricks climbing tier upon tier, and at such places they sometimes asked for the shelter of barn or byre.

The folks moved about without any fear, though at Rockall Tower still dwelt Grier of Lag, but then the Annandale folk were no good Whigs at any time.

They met with few rude answers, and none such were given to Silver Sand, who looked like a prince and travelled like one. Before they parted at the side of the Eden Water, Silver Sand made Jasper his overman and the collector of his dues and obligations for all the English clans. This had been Juliana's work, and for the sake

of her husband and son, the smith of the Clough took the matter in hand.

"It is not meet that the Faa himself should ask and beg, bargain and chaffer," said Jasper Stanley, "so as I cannot live for ever I shall take young Sylvester to help me—Supple Sylvester of Harpurhey Dean. He is quick of wit, and for his weight a non-such fighter. He will look to all the border and southland as far as the Wash and the Marches of Wales. But you must speak to the Red Killer about this country we have quitted. For look you, John Faa, though you have been a noble benefactor as well as a good son to me, I have left up yonder all I hold dear—and I have no mind to see again that strange land and barren which has been our place of refuge these many months. I shall, therefore, send Supple Sylvester twice a year to you to the place which you shall appoint by letter. But for Jasper Stanley, once he has crossed Eden Water, he comes no more to the black hills where he left the pride of his old, sad heart."

The two men stood alone on the edge of the full-fed drumly water. They could hear the pipes of the Stanleys playing a march of rejoicing because they were once more on the plain red English earth.

The overword came to their ears:

"And he will comfort you sometimes,
Mother, as I have done."

They stood on the margin and sang as they watched the boatman go back for their chief.

"Oh, for the rose, the gentle rose,
And the fennil that grows so green!
God give us grace in every place
To pray for our King and Queen!"

The huge smith dashed the water from his eyes and, almost with the same gesture indicated the hills of Scotland, of which only the white dome of Criffel was now visible.

"Our Queen!" he said bitterly, "she that was our Queen, lies yonder!"

XXXIII

AVE ATQUE VALE

SILVER SAND did not again return to the hill country. He provided liberally for Juliana's son, and set on the Red Killer to be his guardian. He made him also doer or agent, and in the change-house of Creetown bound him by the crossing of bloods to a special fidelity. He was to decide ordinary cases of gipsy justice and appeal only was to lie to John Faa. So that he should be less bound to travel about from tribe to tribe. He had as yet no idea where he would settle or how far afield he would wander. But for his fear of anarchy at home and the bringing down upon Egypt of the stranger's justice, he would have gone back to France.

But this, it was evident he could not do while James Stuart reigned and a fearful people took their bread day by day, in uncertainty and trembling, from the hollow of God's hand.

All was at last regulated, and Silver Sand was now free to go where he pleased. He turned his horse's head to the west and rode into the eye of the sunset.

No, you are wrong, reader. He was not going at all to Lochnaw, neither to Charteris Lodge, which her aunt's recent death had conveyed to Lilias. He was not travelling towards the North Channel to see any woman, but just to stable his beast and draw in his chair at the inglenook of an old dominie, whose privilege it has been to stitch together all these records of strange happenings. At least that is what he told me.

He came to the school-house with the grey of the nightfall and the salt sea mist which rolled up over the

Rhynns, as the tides drave in from the Atlantic. Never was man more welcome, hardly even a sweetheart! For, as God is my hope I had feared to look upon his face no more, and I had taken a fancy to love the lad. I had changes to make when he came, for in the winter season, when few folk travel, even a dominie gets into out-at-elbows ways. I had some pet fowls to shut back into the hen house, and a she-goat and kidling to change from the stable to the byre, lest Silver Sand's long-tailed Arab should object to such fellowship of the commons. I need not have troubled; in twenty-four hours Myrrha was back again with her young one, and indeed finished by taking quite the upper hand of good-natured Saladin.

But I hastened my supper and kept busy about the fire, hardly daring to look Silver Sand in the eyes. I did not speak at all of Juliana, nor of the boy, though I knew all. For the Killer had written me two letters by the post of Egypt (which is mysterious as the blowing of the wind), and John Faa knew by my silence and perhaps by my hasty and ill-regulated chatter, that I knew. So neither of us said anything of consequence, but ate and drank with the relish and good comradeship of men who love and respect each other of a long season. Then after I had cleared away and washed the vessels—I fear with that showing of haste which is called "a lick and a promise," I set down the square-faced case of Hollands upon the table, with smuggler's brandy and good country spirit made by Sir Andrew's forest-guard—who having nothing to do but see that no one killed muir-pouts before the first of August, would undoubtedly without his still have been driven into a melancholy. A little basket of rushes filled with new clay pipes and a ten-pound jar of the best Virginia tobacco settled us for the night—that is to say, with the kettle singing on the hob and the fine yellow lemons which Silver Sand had carried in a net at his saddle bow all the way from Dumfries Sands.

I had wine also, the gift of my good patron, but I did

not present it. For a man in Silver Sand's position and mood of mind needs the stronger comfort—that is, wisely and in reason, as two men such as he and I meant to use it. I think we were at least a good quarter of an hour mixing and stirring as if there was nothing more in our minds than to get the beverage to our taste.

The candles, six in number, were set in sconces of solid silver, for though but a dominie, the Crogos are of a good house in East Galloway, and have chiefly followed the Church and mine own way of life—dominie and minister succeeding each other according to the accident of large or small families. And now I had no family but Myrrha, my goat, Fleckie in the byre, and the hens which regularly misconducted themselves with sleepy peckings upon my own rafters.

We felt shy of speech—that is, of the frank free speech of men such as ourselves. We were not the men to put one another off with counters or tags of conversation. I spoke at last of the news from Sir Andrew at Ballikill, and, the good thought coming to me, I got down the letters out of the high wall-press and read them one by one to him. No one of them ended without a request for news of Silver Sand. And when Sir Andrew had got a letter for himself from the Dungeon of Buchan he was not content till he had copied half of it for my benefit, lest his news might be later or fuller than mine.

When I had finished the reading of the last, I looked up suddenly and put my thought to him.

"If I were you, Silver Sand, I should take the boat at the Chapel steps and hie me over to greet Sir Andrew. He will not believe all that has come to pass here during these last weeks. Yet it will not do for him to come home too soon. We are not at the final cast of the dice yet, and the enemies who have gone may yet come riding back up the Lochnaw loaning!"

I could see him hesitating at the cross-roads, his mind uncertain which way to take. So I put in my word.

"We are able to do the watching for now the country is raised. The Society Men are drilling. They have four officers of the old Scotch Dutch between here and Glenluce, and as many more in the valley of the Dee. Besides James Agnew is at Innermessan with his bride, and my Lord Eglinton has sent him a score of Montgomeries and Cunninghams to keep the castle. Hal of Windy Standard, now the laird and a reformed character, has brought down half-a-dozen Loch Doon men, and swears that he will die before ever hoof of a King's horse clatters on the paved court of Lochnaw. Besides he is a merry lad enough, well-liked, and good company for Lilias. Every forenoon, between ten and eleven of the clock you can see them riding together, and as often as not they look in upon the dominie to the destruction of his senior classes, and the open-mouthed admiration of the pinafored rabble."

"I shall go to Ireland," answered Silver Sand, promptly, and indeed I was glad he should say that. For I knew he would only wear his heart out as things were here—with Juliana lying under the snow of the Dungeon, her babe among friendly but fremit folk, and Lilias riding out daily with Hal Bruce of Windy Standard. The fact is, he had yielded to a sudden impulse in coming to us on the Back Shore of Leswalt. One life had closed down upon him with the suddenness of a trick in a theatre, and Silver Sand had turned his horse's head towards the only other he knew, and, so far as I was concerned, he had done well.

But all the same I realised that he was too near Lochnaw, and the daily comings and goings of its people between Charteris Lodge and Innermessan.

It was a couple of hours after that he first spoke of Juliana and the bairn. I let on that, save the bare fact, everything was news to me. He spoke with a sad manfulness which I had not thought within his compass a year ago. No wife could have been more to him than Juliana.

Love, service, self-sacrifice—she had given him her woman's all, and he was not going to forget her. As to the boy he did not see his way so clear. But this he did see, when the time came he should be either altogether a gipsy like Jasper Stanley, his grandfather, or educated without the least knowledge of Egypt. He should not be condemned like his father to be the sport of two irreconcilable laws, so that if he obeyed one he stood condemned by the other. He should not fall between two stools as he (Silver Sand) had done, with instinct warring against reason, and the present against the past.

I listened as he spoke, saying little but nodding my head whenever he looked for approval, and at the end extending my hand to clasp his. I was beginning as a tactful man to understand my John Faa, just as long ago I had plumbed the possibilities of my patron, good Sir Andrew.

Silver Sand's idea of his own double nature entertained me vastly, affording me a field for curious thought and what I may call philosophical theory. He was far more entertaining than Sir Andrew, who for his part was as little complicated as a Jack-pudding, though (let me add) of a rare tender nature, kindly as heather honey, and yet refreshing as four-year-old October ale.

The next day I was up early and went over to Port Patrick clachan where was an old crony of mine, Captain Paul Wishart, who had left the ploughing of the seas to try the growing of cabbages and potatoes on that wind-swept promontory. He had however built his house on a little stance which the laird had given him near the entrance of the glen. You could see the Channel and the ships from the front windows—that of course. Paul Wishart could not have lived without the sea, but the garden extended down into the shelter of the glen, and promised marvellous things with flowers and vegetables.

I asked the Captain what ships were in Loch Ryan or hanging about the coast, which in case of necessity

could be depended upon to land a passenger safely in Larne Loch.

"A friend o' yours," quoth he. "And needing a safe cast ashore! Then I judge that the fewer who are treated to the name of the gentleman the better. Why look for a first rater? I have down yonder in the cove, a dainty lugger, little bigger than a ship's boat. But I will warrant her for speed and safety. I will sail her myself, and no one the wiser. 'There goes old Paul—always at his sailing ploys—his fingers itch for the ropes. He does not know what else to do with them. Look, the *Bella* is new painted, and when he comes back he will begin and repaint her all over again!' Oh, I know how they talk. Well, let them—all that makes for safety. When did ever the King's new preventive men take a look at my cargo when I landed, no—not though I have run from Ramsey Bay in the Isle of Man, time and again?"

I was most content and set up with this promise. For sometimes Captain Paul Wishart was inclined to be stiff in his notions and especially afraid of taking any risks which might embroil him with the Government or entail the seizure of his beloved *Bella.*

I communicated my news to Silver Sand, whom on my return I found pacing gloomily up and down in front of the house, keeping to the open space of trodden promenade (which I call Areopagus) from which a fair view of Castle Lochnaw and its approaches could be had.

He listened attentively and courteously, as indeed he did in all circumstances. (For excepting that one time with poor Juliana I have never seen his temper ruffled.)

But he answered that he could not go to see Sir Andrew in Ireland without first paying his respects to my Lady, and taking with him her latest commands.

Of course I knew that this was merely an excuse—an excuse made not to me but to himself and to poor Juliana who lay dead among the headlands of Buchan.

I did not think it for the best, and told him so. But I might as well have talked to the rocks of the Black Head. He had made up his mind, and I could only remind him of the wilful man's proverb: "*He* that will to Coupar, maun to Coupar!"

So in the afternoon he set off. I could watch him go without interfering with the discipline of the school. For it was that somnolent hour which all dominies know —when whole classes drowse, and not a lesson can be reasonably heard, when a black-board of sums or a sheaf of copy-lines serves to pass the time, when the buzzings of a blue-bottle on a window pane, or the drowsy falling in of wood or peat ash in the big school-room grate are the most notable incidents. Then the dominie, if he be a wise man, puts his authority into his desk with his tawse, becomes a little deaf and more than a little blind, and with a sigh of what in any other man would be pleasure draws out a favourite volume and betakes himself to the refreshing of his spiritual part.

I say I watched Silver Sand stride down the road. There was about him a something which was wholly new. Never again could he be mistaken for a supple Sylvester, nor imagined as doing battle for his rights with the red-eyed smith.

This was a man, not merely an agile scholar of the fathers at Issy, and of the Parisian *salle d'armes*. He walked like a great gentleman too, and yet planted his feet like one who has met and outfaced the high problems of Life and Death.

He must be let go his own way. Nothing that honest old Nathan Crogo could say would influence him any more—that is, once when his mind was made up. However, I might still find room to shove in my oar while his course was in the making.

I am not at liberty to say how I came by the narrative of what happened that memorable day. It is sufficient

that I do know the details intimately, and that I am at liberty to produce them.

In the front of Lochnaw Castle there existed at that time and till the time of Son James' cruel reparations, a kind of English "garden wild," called by some learned men (though not by Sir Andrew who owned it), the Spenserian. Tall ash trees overshaded it, the boles shooting up clean of branches to a crown of foliage, and the space beneath green and cool like the aisle of a natural cathedral. Then under foot was only clean grass, and the cheerful beds of flowers, self-sown mostly, appearing unexpectedly among the greenery.

Lilias Agnew was moving about, looking at this and that tender bud of spring, or even the promise of a bud. A sound of laughter came to Silver Sand's ear, but he knew well enough that it was not Lilias's argentine tinkle. When he came in sight of her, she was bending over a rose-bush in the act of pruning it, her brows bent in earnestness, and the crescent-shaped blade firmly held in her hand. Young Hal Bruce walked beside her, and with his hands stuck into his silken sash, laughed at her devotion. She took no more notice of his merriment than of the yapping of a puppy, but serenely went on with her task.

Presently she looked up, perhaps conscious of a third presence, and saw the grave slender figure of Silver Sand standing uncovered before her.

She grew pale and turned away as if to go indoors without a salutation. But Silver Sand was not now a man to put up with that from any woman.

"Mistress Lilias," he said, "I have a word to speak to you before I cross the sea to visit your uncle. It is a word which can only be spoken in private. This gentleman (he bowed courteously to Hal Bruce) will understand and excuse me. I have only the time between two tides in which to transact much business."

"My lady is in the Castle," said Lilias, coldly, and

without looking at him, "you may transact your business with her. You can have none with me!"

"I have business with her ladyship, but first with you. Mr. Bruce, I have the honour to invite you—to retire!"

The young man flushed and laid his hand angrily on his sword-hilt. "I am not accustomed——" he began, hotly.

Lilias turned upon him with a flash of temper.

"Oh, go away," she said, "do you not see that this is no place for boys!"

He went without a word, and did not even strut or cock his plumed beaver, yet young Windy Standard was a lad of mettle too when among his fellows and cup-companions.

"Now, sir, pray be brief," said Lilias, wearily, "this interview is none of my seeking, and it is as much as I can do to listen to you. Do not strain my good will."

Silver Sand remained bareheaded before her, but his black mourning dress upon his tall slight figure had something commanding which engaged the eye of Lilias.

"You were good enough, when you last bade me farewell, to say that you wished me well, and also that you wished well to my wife!"

As Silver Sand paused the blood mounted hotly to the girl's cheek.

"I spoke hastily, I daresay," she said, "and uttered a great deal more than I meant. It is my habit and my fault."

"I believe—I am constrained to believe—that so far as concerns the good woman who was my wife according to the laws of my people, you did wish her well. And your wishes have been granted. She is dead!"

"Dead—dead," exclaimed Lilias, the blood ebbing from her face, "I did not know. I am sorry—oh, believe that I am sorry."

"I am sure of it," said Silver Sand, "she died in

rescuing me from the dragoons. She left behind her a child—my son!"

"She died—where is the baby?"

Lilias spoke with more than her usual impetuosity. She seemed to be compelling him to answer.

"I have left it with some good honest people at the House of the Star near Loch Enoch. The daughter has a child of her own."

"Why did you not take the child to your wife's people?"

"They were present at the funeral, but they dwell far away. I do not know their women, and I have not yet made up my mind whether he shall be brought up a gipsy or a house-dweller. I only know that he must be wholly one or wholly the other—and not have his condemnation written from the moment of his birth!"

Lilias looked at him a little wanly. The flashing heat of temper had died out of her eyes. Something soft and beautiful irradiated about her, which became her as a summer day becomes a fair landscape.

She had thought love to be selfish and now it was turning out to be generous. Indeed her anger had long ago made a private truce with Silver Sand, as is the case with all noble women. Love had come home to her, not as guest merely, but as an angel at unawares, and she had found herself making excuses for him.

Only at his sudden appearance her pride had risen to her aid, and helped her to speak harshly—as she had done before.

But as he stood there, so changed, so distant, so proudly humble, without anything to ask and yet with certain accents of command in his voice, her heart grew warm and pitiful within her.

"Poor Juliana," she murmured, "I may call her that now? She won the gift of gifts, the good she asked for, but to enjoy it she had but short time. Her sweet little world, all of her own making, came so soon to an end!

Tell me at the last that she did not suffer—she could not —she had you!"

Silver Sand's face grew dark and pained to recall the time and place. But he manned himself and gave what account he could of Juliana's end. Lilias listened breathlessly with parted lips and brimming eyes. The dark and serious tale-teller spoke on softly, and sparing himself no whit, blamed his own blindness and ignorance. But Lilias interrupted him:

"It would have made no difference. God had willed it so, and she had the joy of possessing her first-born man-child which none could take from her!"

"That is what she said—almost the last thing before she died."

Lilias started and held out her hands with a gesture of friendship suddenly offered. "Make the boy a good man," she said quickly, "make him like Sir Andrew. Let him be simple and true. Bring him up far from the world. You and I, Silver Sand, are spoilt by Paris. We can never taste clean spring water again."

"I shall endeavour," Silver Sand added sadly, "that he does not grow up to resemble his father."

XXXIV

GREY ROGER, OUTLAW

THE *Bella* was running before the wind, and the Skipper, who had never commanded so small a vessel, nor one he loved so greatly, was observing that she was not much to look at, but a wonder to go. He told Silver Sand also that he did not believe in "cracking on" too much canvas in these twisty cross currents, but that what the *Bella* lost in spread of sail, she made up for in lightness.

Captain Paul gave orders to Silver Sand, whose quick agility delighted him, and though he had often to translate his meaning into land terms to be understood, he declared that a single voyage round the Horn would make a sailor of his passenger.

"She how she elbows aside the waves. Never a splash —oh, that did not count—I but eased her off a point. But you can tell Sir Andrew that if he names the day and hour, he will find Captain Paul waiting for him at the port of Lough Larne, and that he will undertake to bring him safe into Loch Ryan in the teeth of a Nor'-Easter gale."

"But," he added, "there are a plenty of fine days, and Lord love you, it takes a sailor to tell what a fine thing fine weather is—fair wind, fair sea, and homeward bound! Tell him the Lochnaw people are wistful and wae for the sight of him. I speak not for those within, but of those outside the Castle. Let him send a word or a line to Captain Paul of Port Patrick and he will serve his turn and that with a will."

He was in high spirits with the good speed they were

making, and sang old sea songs and interminable ballads, sometimes in a wind-in-the-keyhole falsetto, and again in a deep sea bass, all about land lubbers and pirates, and highwaymen who rob poor sailors.

And ever as the *Bella* dipped and ducked, the salt water swishing and spraying from her bows, the Captain would lean forward and chuckle.

"Marrying? Why now, marrying is nothing to this. If I were married, would I be allowed to race the *Bella* across the North Channel like this, a joy to all good Scots and an envy-ing to all Irishmen? No, Master Silver Sand. I should be dock-hauled, and a dry dock at that —while as for the *Bella,* she, poor darling, would get her permanent retreat, and be tarpaulined down in a boat-shed, fit only to take the bairns round to Sand Eel Bay on a fine Saturday once or twice in the month of August. That's why I never wedded. The *Bella* is more to me than wife or bairns!"

All the while the cliffs of Scotland sank into the sea, lost their greyish white glint and became blue and misty. Ireland mounted victoriously, until far to the south Silver Sand could see over the flats of Belfast, the tiny Sierra of Mourne Mountains, dainty and faint, as a picture drawn in aquatint.

The Skipper sang his sea ballads and sailed the *Bella* with equal delight. The wind helped them all the way, and soon they saw the shore of Larne Loch—or at least the Captain did, for Silver Sand could see no way into it, and said so. But Paul Wishart laughed and set the *Bella's* bow at the swell, adroitly turned a corner, and lo! there before them were the houses of the little town, a snug landing-place, and a small church with a steeple into the portal of which the people were trooping, though it was not the Sabbath.

Captain Paul and Silver Sand made all snug, and upon landing they went together to the church. It was a fast-day meeting in preparation for the Communion of Sun-

day. And nothing astonished Silver Sand more than to be told that though the church was a Presbyterian one, many of those present were "Episcopians," and that the sects of Protestantism dwelt in friendliness together, instead of harassing and oppressing each other by royal command as in Scotland. The two did not stay long, because Silver Sand desired to be put on the road to Ballikill, while Captain Paul wished to take advantage of the wind and tide to carry him back again to his anchorage at Port Patrick.

Silver Sand dared not offer money to his friend. But he took from a bunch at his fob a little gold compass, very accurate, and mounted in ivory after the fashion of a steering wheel, which he had bought in the Palais Royal suburbs from the great Monsieur Oudin, who made suchlike for the officers of the King's navy.

"Let this be a souvenir of the *Bella's* best run," he said with real gratitude.

"It has been a pleasure, sir, and if you were to favour me with your company back, I could show you the *Bella* do better still. But I thank you for the compass. It was never made on this side of the channel. What, Oudin?—Once I had a bridge-clock of his making, the best that ever ticked."

He stepped aboard, shook hands warmly, repeated his invitation to Sir Andrew, and in five minutes the *Bella* was spinning between the heads and pointing for the open sea.

* * * * *

"They that go down to the sea in ships, who do their business upon the mighty waters." The words came to Silver Sand, inveterate landsman that he was, and he gave thanks that his feet were once more on the solid ground.

He understood little of the danger, nothing of the fascination. Life so short, the sea so vast. The sailor

must submit to the whims of the sea, its rages, its flat calms, its incalculable currents, as he submits to death—because things are so and he cannot help it.

He turned away when the sail of the *Bella* was finally adjusted for the long homeward tack.

"The yockels, the townsmen, the soldiers, the priests,
Sing high, sing low, my own little maid!
She minds them less than the farmyard beasts,
She fasts not their fasts, and she feasts not their feasts,
Sing high, sing low, my own little maid!"

Silver Sand heard the words of the Captain's song bite through the gathering mists of evening. Then he himself was hailed out of the unseen.

"Gentleman, kind gentleman, I will take you far, I will take you near. I am the guide of the stranger and his friend, certified and appointed as such by the municipality of Belfast. I heard it said that you were on your way to Sir Andrew. Now I will guide you there for a trifle—such as would be of no consequence to so well-dressed a gentleman. Sure, I am an old man, but there's a flash about your eye, my lord, that minds me of the owld country, and of me in my youth——"

"I can find the road for myself," said Silver Sand, with some sharpness. "I doubt not that you have been in Scotland, but never a Scot. You are a Romany, my friend, a rogue Romany whom my father expatriated. I know my own people. Let me see the veins on your wrists."

"Who are you that knows so much, upon the sea-wrack of Larne Loch?" said the man sullenly.

"I am John Faa, the son of John, and you are an outcast from the tribes," said Silver Sand to the tall man with the pendant arms. "Take care, John Faa's writ runs here as it did when you killed Lidgett Sylvester on the commonty of Kirkcudbright town. There is blackness in your heart and a knife under your cloak.

Bethink you, Grey Roger. I can name you though I have never seen you. My father left me the gift of the Faas, which is to see into the heart of man, and also I know the records of Egypt. Your name is written there and not for good, sirrah. You were given one chance more, and I fear you have misused it. But I shall make more sure inquiry. And, by the way, did you ever hear of the Red Killer?"

"Is he with you, John Faa?" shrieked the man, his voice pitching upward into the keening note, as if he were singing at his own death wake. "If you set him on me I am no better than——"

"No better than Lidgett Sylvester who lies six foot deep in the land of Selkirk's Isle with your knife thrust through his heart!"

The man called Grey Roger—he had no other name, so he sometimes gave himself out as Roger Grey, because his own name and clan had solemnly renounced him—stood dazed and stupefied before his chief. He did not for a moment doubt into whose hands he had fallen, and so he submitted.

"I took you for a foreigner, sor, so I did," he muttered, "what is a poor man to do? Let the son of John Faa put himself in my position."

"I would not fasten on strangers with the hope of cutting their throats before dawn. Why, man, where is your gipsy wit? Did you ever think of going to a fair with a garron or two on a rope to sell to the Gorgios?"

"I might think till all was blue," said Grey Roger, sullenly, "but how am I to get the garrons—not in traffic, for I have no money, and not by finding them convenient in a field, for here they hang a man for no other reason than that a mare has taken a fancy to follow him."

"Give me your knife, Grey Roger. It is no safe plaything for you and the brace of pistols I see at your waistbelt. Then I shall give you money to buy a string of good doctorable crocks which will do you honour at any

fair. Only on the third morning from now you shall come to the farm town of Ballikill and send word for Silver Sand (which is my name here) and you will let me see what you have bought with the money of the tribe! If you try to cheat—well, so much the worse for you—there remains the Red Killer!"

"I will do *ut!*" said the man sourly, watching Silver Sand as he stowed away his arms, "but ye leave me protectionless with much money, among a bad mistrustful people, who will chase and chivvy me if I cannot show them my teeth."

"Use the money well," said Silver Sand, "let me hear no ill report of you, or Captain Paul shall bring over the McKitterick, who, I think, has some little matters outstanding to regulate with you. The Captain could have him on your trail in six hours, and shortly after you would lie as still as did ever Lidgett Sylvester!"

"I will do *ut!*—I tould ye I wud do *ut!*" repeated the man with dogged dulness, "what more can a man say even to his chief?"

"A man can obey. Here are the gold pieces!"

The black gipsy eyes, small and evil, became mere beads in an acreage of bloated face. But he was disappointed. He had hoped to see the purse of his chief, and though he cringed before John Faa, yet his long crime-stained career and residence in Ireland had made him little better than a common cut-throat or "road-ganger." He was full of stratagems, which, after all, gained him hardly enough with which to buy potheen and rye-bread. He was "crooked as the Killy burn," as they say in that part of Ireland, and cunning as "the owld blackman." But all served him nothing. The settlers treated him as an outlaw, and he had felt the lash and more than once narrowly shaved the gallows. He took John Faa's money, but he should have preferred to cut his throat for it first.

Silver Sand went after service to the Presbyterian

minister, and opened himself (in so far as was necessary) to Mr. Bean, whose ancestors had come from Clachanpluck, a village exactly in the centre of Galloway East.

The good man was delighted to see Silver Sand. He knew Mr. Dunning, whose presbytery had licensed him to preach, and he himself would bring him safe to Ballikill on the morrow. They should go in his own boat, and the tide would serve them by six o'clock.

They were on the water before that hour, and the minister's young wife from Causewayend in Kelton parish, had risen to give them a good Galloway breakfast of oatcakes, porridge, and bacon.

The waters of the loch were leaping and glittering with a wind which came straight up from the flats of Lough Neagh. They could see the brown top of Dunroe on the horizon and on the other side the smoke rose from hundreds of early hearth-fires in the great new town of Belfast.

A pleasant dappled glen opened before them. Meadow and orchard, wattle-fence and well-hung gate, told of the planters from Scotland whose pride it was to keep all snug and trim within sight of the Irishry.

"Mistress McClarty may do for Ayrshire," they said, "but here good Protestants must be clean!"

Having arrived at their destination the minister and Silver Sand turned up the well-kept path, among the laurels and evergreens, the like of which was not to be seen, except at Hillsborough, throughout all the North of Ireland.

Ballikill was more like a fortress than a gentleman's mansion. Long blank walls, loopholed for musketry fire and furnished with a top gallery protected by a breastwork, behind which men might walk in safety, surrounded the square court on all sides.

"Aye," quoth the minister, "Patrick Agnew knows how to look after himself. The rapparees from Knock-

many and the Donegal hills yonder will not catch him napping, all the more that now he has his chief with him, who I am given to understand has been a man of war from his youth up."

"But the house?" queried Silver Sand, "where is the house?"

He had been accustomed, both in Scotland and in France, to white houses set openly under a shelter of trees, and these long fortress-like walls made him wonder where the people must live.

"And ye may well ask," said the minister, "never a snugger house or a more commodious than this of Ballikill! Only, you see, it was built in troubled times and stood the siege of '41, in the time of Pat Agnew's father, when O'Donnell's men threw the quarters of murdered tenants over the riggings of the office-houses with the cry that if they were hungry the besieged were at liberty to have a snack at what was left. As for them they had eaten all the Protestants they could. Small wonder that the Agnews still put up their chains and shoot their bolts every night."

Silver Sand and the minister were ignorant that they were being watched from the depths of the park shrubberies by two pairs of eyes—those of the renegade gipsy Grey Roger and his comrade Doran O'Flannigan of Killibegs, son of the great rebel and a prominent man in the bandit Society of the "Devil's Requiem."

"The 'Dying-Day'* doth steal aloft
And all who do offend it,
If any laugh, they laugh not oft,
A blunderbuss shall end it."

So, having no fear even of their own religion before their eyes, the "Dying Day" outlaws took upon them-

*"The Dying-Day." This hymn tune, used as a warning, was sung or whistled at night under the windows of threatened houses.

selves to parody the Latin hymn for the dead, which is only heard when the priest having sprinkled the consecrated clay, takes the spade and throws on the coffin the first spadeful of earth.

Doran O'Flannigan had promised to lend Grey Roger as many Donegal ponies as would pass muster, for a quarter-share of the money which he had received from Silver Sand to make him an honest man.

The minister and Silver Sand passed within the great gate of Ballikill which was bolted and barred every night. It was a noble piece of smith-work and swung on its hinges with a harsh grating sound which, in spite of abundant grease, the proud peasants of the estate declared could be heard three miles.

Once within, a range of byres, barns, cart-sheds, bullock ranges, potato-shelters and henroosts spread themselves round three sides of the vast quadrangle. The shorter end facing the south was occupied by a comfortable gentleman's mansion, of necessity compact, but airy and garden-fronted with flowering shrubs and lawns of such emerald turf as only Ireland can show. The house was tiled in red after the Scottish fashion of the greater folk, and not a yard of thatch entered into the construction of those long ranges of roofing.

Pat Agnew did not mean to be burnt out if he could help it.

As they arrived at the door the two gentlemen whom they were seeking came leisurely out of a great barn, stuffed with well-trimmed, closely packed mows of yellow sheaves.

At sight of them Sir Andrew let out a "golder" of astonishment, which may have been an oath or again, considering the presence of the minister, may have been intended for a benediction.

He rushed towards Silver Sand and caught him by both hands, shaking him up and down and from side to side in a passion of joy. "Patrick," he cried to the

thin dark man with the hooked nose and humorous mouth who had accompanied him, "this is Silver Sand of whom I have told you, come all the way from Scotland to see his friend at his home in Ireland."

"I am glad to see ye, Mister Silver Sand," said the eagle-beaked man smiling, "Sir Andrew has talked of but little else except your sayings and doings ever since he came to Ballikill. It is the proud man that he will be (and I his cousin to the back of him) to welcome you to the good house. And you, Mr. Bean, my best service to you, and to your good lady."

They went indoors and Patrick Agnew, who had become a true Ulster Protestant, conforming to the habits and speech of the colonists in King James's Plantation, first gave orders about immediate dinner, and then took out the minister to view the stock.

Sir Andrew, a little greyer, a little stouter, but brimfull of the old good-natured shrewdness and kindly wit, laid his hand on the young man's arm where the *crape* covered the silk-facings after the French mourning fashion.

"I have lost my wife," he said, answering the unspoken question, "a noble woman to whom I was married according to the custom of my tribe."

"Yes," said Sir Andrew, "Jean Hay told me the story. We have nothing that is not common knowledge between us, so I warn you it is dangerous to tell either of us secrets. Yet I had thought—I had thought——"

He paused and looked at Silver Sand.

The young man's eyes met his frankly.

"And you did well to think, Sir Andrew. I came near to being a hound, but I was not. I fled temptation. It is true that I was compelled for tribal reasons to marry a wife I had never courted, but for all that she proved herself a true and noble wife to me, and I shall never say less."

Sir Andrew patted his shoulder with his hand.

"Indeed no one would wish you to say less, but am I to take it—is it still the case——?"

"Oh," cried Silver Sand, hardly able to speak his words intelligibly, "you may take it that what I could not help, when I had good cause to help it—I cannot help now! But it is not I that will trouble her with the knowledge!"

Sir Andrew shook his head with an air of one possessing omniscient experience.

"One never knows with women—at least a man does not prophesy, even when he reaches my age—what he may say or do. But come out to the hill-top and let us see about us while you tell me all about Jean Hay, and James my son, and my niece Lilias, whom I wager, for all your airs and graces, you visited most and last ere you left Lochnaw."

So they went up to the top of Knockanmore, and beheld the dark flowery heath spread out before them, the sun shining with the freshness of a new spring, and the cloud, which had hung about the mountain tops, breaking away in white argosies to float across the plain-land. Larks spirited up from about their feet singing as they went as if to celebrate their escape—peewits stooped, and curlew wailed their weird *"willywha."*

But beneath them they saw pastures richer and of a more vivid green than was ever seen in Scotland, and on them, guarded everywhere by boys with long switches, roamed herds of sleek cattle, browsing cows, brood mares, restless colts, while from the upper pastures came the bleating of yews and lambs, which, when heard at a distance, is the most pensive, gracious, and sweet of all country sounds. Even Sir Andrew, not easily moved by the beauty of natural things, having known nothing else all his life, was moved to remark, "Well may Cousin Patrick find some money at last to pay the rent of all this!

" 'Tis time he did, so I was telling him. But poor Pat,

after all he had better put by a trifle out of the profits, while I am above the daisies. For James will be quite another man to deal with, than he whom Jean Hay calls 'her ain mickle kindly saft clach o' a man,' Andrew!"

A blackbird whistled flutily in an early flowering thorn, and called back Sir Andrew's thoughts. He asked particularly how all his household were looking, and especially if Jean Hay wanted him back.

Silver Sand went into the details of all that had happened in Scotland since the reading of the Acts of Indulgence. The Sheriff could not sit still when he heard of Lochnaw Castle cleared of its oppressive garrison and of the southward march of the troops to protect the King in his own capital. He instantly declared his intent of making the crossing as soon as Captain Paul Wishart had been apprised. It wearied him to think of Lochnaw and Jean Hay. Besides if they did come back—the Grahams and their weary red-coats, he could always take the hill for it, and the Gled's Nest and the Doocot Cave were as safe for him and as comfortable as ever they had been for the much frailer bones of Mr. Walter Dunning.

"My lady bade me not let you venture," Silver Sand repeated for the twentieth time.

"And I am telling you, you obstinate gipsy lord, that I ken my ain wife better than ever you can. She shall be glad enough and smiling enough when she sees her 'muckle kindly saft clach o' an Andrew.' Do not distress yourself about me and Jean Hay. It is not yestreen that we first understood one another."

And the Sheriff stood erect and chanted with his head up and his chest thrown out, "Impatient I wait for my love to return." Then with a short laugh he broke off, "Listen to the old fool—there is no fool like him!"

But Silver Sand stood silent and admiring. To this strong, sturdily-sensed man—the most remote from sentiment and emotion it was possible to conceive—the

very name of Jean Hay, heard amid either beautiful or sordid surroundings, was as the call of a trumpet. He saw the best of Ireland, heath and pasturage, flock and herd. Yet at a word of his wife there came a tear into his eye, and he was once more wandering with her hand in his, and both as young as when he had fetched her over from Park, riding on the grey filly her father had given her and asking when they would come in sight of Lochnaw. He remembered that she had talked much of a very dainty dairy she was going to have as soon as they were settled, and he wondered how the project had fallen into the background. If she liked she could have it now with part of the money he had got in Ireland from his cousin's long arrears.

Silver Sand flicked with his switch at the pale blue of the flax and wondered. He could not hinder this return. Did he want very much to prevent it? Echoes of old mysteries began to sing in his soul. Strange music sounded deep down within him like gnomes and pixies chanting in caverns. John Faa was still a young man, and though he had learned to love Juliana, it was because she had so largely, nobly, and unselfishly loved him. He had a great store still unexpended. Indeed all that was really love still remained shut up within him, like the water in a deep well, which in its cool rock darkness waits to be pierced. It would be wonderful—it was past all thinking—that one day he should worship and serve a woman as Juliana had worshipped and served him. He had known the love maternal, and the love protective. He was familiar with falling tears and tender grateful glances. Now even these had gone past him, and left him standing as one who watches blossoms, too early snatched, float down to the sea which is Forgetfulness—but which at the same time (thanks be to God) is Peace also.

XXXV

THE COCKSURE ASS—AND SOME OTHERS

OF all fools the worst is the cocksure young ass. See him sit in the great corner chair, which should be his grandfather's, arrogant and supercilious, not only dispensing wisdom, but willing to inform his seniors in what wisdom consists! Every age has doubtless possessed him, and I have seen not a few in my day, both before the Revolution and after. The breed was more courtly before, more political and quasi-philosophic afterwards. But never did I see any one quite so complete in all his parts, movements, and adjustments, as young Heathcote Lumley, who came from Oxford to instruct us barbarians concerning the wonders of the University and incidentally to marry Mistress Lilias if she chanced to please him.

For Heathcote Lumley was a young man without fortune, of good appearance and no particular prospects, who was perfectly suited to be an agreeable companion to the ladies of a nobleman's family—if that peer had been in want of an idle secretary. But the duties attached to such a position daunted him, and after three months in the service of my Lord the Earl of Beaupré, he had decided to fall back upon the plan of marrying an heiress as at once a neater and more convenient way of earning money than sordidly working for it.

He had met in the French capital my lady of Belle Isle, who had told him so much of Lilias Agnew, and had so greatly exaggerated the fortune of Aunt Anne of the Lodge, that within a month after setting out in the Calais diligence, Heathcote Lumley, furnished with all imagin-

able introductions and titles to hospitality, was installed at Lochnaw, where he preened himself to the silent contempt of James, and the open resentment of Hal Bruce. But as the ladies appeared to like it, no one could suggest that a young man anxious to see the northern part of His Majesty's dominions ought not to tarry week after week in the most outlandish parts of Galloway.

Of all imaginable and unimaginable facts to which Sir Andrew had looked forward, that of being received at his own door and ushered into his own house—nay, almost introduced to his own wife, by Heathcote Lumley, was perhaps the most unexpected and astonishing. It was a wonder that the honest, but not particularly long-suffering gentleman, did not explode.

Since he had been landed at the mouth of the Knock Water, he had not waited a moment for man or beast, but had taken the directest road for Locknaw, on foot and alone. Silver Sand had waited behind to see the baggage loaded on the horses, and he had further divided himself from the cavalcade at my door, taking down his belongings and stowing them himself in the poor dominie's gable chamber, which was always a great joy and a great honour for me.

The cases of books and clothes which had arrived from the House of the Dungeon I had put in a safe place to await his return. For though there was peace on the country, who could say for how long it would last? And the school-house was so near the sea-board that a search by the crew of a revenue cutter was always possible.

But in a moment Sir Andrew had swept past or overrun the intruder and found himself with his arms about Jean Hay. Lilias held him closely about the neck, while the young man from the South dusted down his waistcoat and made his reflections on the lack of delicacy among these outlanders. Even Lilias—but—she was young—he would teach her different.

After a minute of fine confused affection, my Lady pushed her prodigal away with her usual "Andrew, you forget yourself. We are not alone."

Sir Andrew turned round and for the first time taking in Heathcote, he burst out with the somewhat brusque query, "Save us, lass, what's this ye hae gotten aboot the hoose?"

"This," said my Lady with dignity, "is Mr. Heathcote Lumley, whom your cousin Madame de Belle Isle has sent to us."

"Oh," said Sir Andrew dryly, "I am just terribly obleeged to Madame de Belle Isle. Master Lumley, your servant! I am feared that I kind o' fell ower ye in the incoming. But ye see I was kind o' pressed for time and maybe no just mindin' the road I was gangin'. But I hope that ye werena muckle hurt. A whammle mair or less at your age is neither here nor there."

"I own I was some little disarranged," said the young man, settling the lace about his dainty wrist-bands, "but I am more rejoiced than I can say to welcome the Judge back to his ancestral mansion."

"Welcome the what?" cried Sir Andrew.

"The Judge, my Lord," said Heathcote, who had been intended for the bar. "I was given to understand that you had been appointed Judge for this part of the Highlands."

"Judge—the Heelants!" cried Sir Andrew. "Whaur hae ye come frae, caain' folk ill names like that?"

"The gentleman is from Oxford, though of late he has been much with Lord Beaupré in Paris," my Lady explained. "He has news of the Court with which he greatly amuses both Lilias and myself."

Again Heathcote preened his feathers in the familiar atmosphere of feminine approval.

"The Court—the Court," cried Sir Andrew, "I think you and Lilias hae but little to do, Jean Hay, than to listen to havers aboot Lewis and his besoms, as if we had

not a court at Whitehall that is making itself a scunner and a heart-break to a' decent men!"

"Sirce alive, Andrew," cried his wife, "blame not the young man. The days were long with you over-seas, but all things will now be changed. Besides as the lad comes from Paris and is acquaint with my lady Belle Isle, so he will find a suitable companion in Silver Sand. It will be bonny to hear the three o' them, Lilias and the lads leathering awa' at the French. For me, I was once in Paris, as ye ken, and I never heard but three words—*le roi, l'argent,* and *travail*—oh yes, and *bon jour.* That makes four, and a brave new gown should I get for being so mindful!"

My Lady was more than a little excited and beside herself with her husband's homecoming, and presently signed to Lilias to take Hal Bruce and the newcomer out for a walk. The glance said as plain as print, that she wanted her Andrew to herself, and Lilias obeyed well pleased, for she thought that if she had to meet Silver Sand again, it would be well that she should be flanked with two squires, one on either side. Silver Sand was no great respecter of the convenances and there was no saying what he might do or say if there were only Hal Bruce in attendance. But she had more hopes of the late secretary of my Lord Beaupré.

But there was no smallest intention of intrusion of any kind in the mind of Silver Sand. He had ordered his lodging with his usual calm decision, and now in the cool of the day he was stepping eastward over the sandy foothills to inform Sir Andrew where he might find him in case of need.

At the beginning of the holly thicket where the avenue of Lochnaw makes an elbow (I speak of the time before Mr. James's alterations, and as it had existed for many generations) is a clump of bushes dense and green, a capital shelter for small birds. There, since Sir Andrew allowed no pot-shooting—not even on the moors except

at due season and with his approval—a congregation of blackbirds, thrushes, and chiefly starlings (then a rare bird elsewhere than Galloway) chattered and chided, thick sown among the foliage and filling the plantations with their garrulous babble. They squabbled about their roosts. They fought about those they had occupied last night and those they meant to have the night after. They fought, wrangled, scolded, and quarrelled merely for the quarrelling's sake.

Silver Sand stopped to listen. The bickering amused him. He shrugged his shoulders and muttered "Politics!" He thought how like men they were, misusing the pleasant brevity of daylight while about them inexorably fell the long chill night.

A pleasant sense of being at home warmed his heart. He was no longer shut within a walled and gloomy fortress, loopholed and menacing, like Cousin Patrick's house of Ballikill. For a moment the gipsy side of his nature was out of sight, and he rejoiced in the clustered ricks of the home-farm stackyard, the track of the plough where it had been lifted from the furrow, the teams following each other, four and four (it took four stout horses to drag the clumsy ploughs of those days) towards the stables with the directness of homing pigeons. Only over a ridge in full labour, one conscientious ploughman urged his plough. The silhouette stood out clean cut against the western refulgence, the straining beasts, the huge unwieldy plough, creaking and pitching like a ship in a sea-way, and last of all he saw the man, bent bow-backed over the plough-stilts, and occasionally shouting an order, now to the horses and now to the limber urchin who ran at their heads.

But it was fated that they should meet, and indeed they could hardly fail. For Lilias, in her eagerness to escape him, had by a strange mischance taken the path which led past the home-farm and over the ridge into the valley of the school-house. It was a path she had often

trod of late, for she had grown curiously anxious for news of her uncle at Ballikill. And so and so, now that she had left Sir Andrew safe indoors gossiping with his Jean Hay, she turned into the same way, with the unconsciousness of feet treading a well-known path of which each pebble and dimple is familiar.

Down yonder was Nevin's Isle and the reeds were swinging there busily as ever, but the feet of Lilias carried her an easier way. There was (she owned it) a new beauty in the world. Her uncle had come home, and with his coming all things had changed. Lochnaw would be itself again—*so* (and I hope you see the connection) having been ordered out by her aunt that she might have Sir Andrew to himself, Lilias took the road to the school-house with her two rival cavaliers by her side.

How gay and glad was her talk! Alternately she flouted and encouraged the two young men, bewildering them by abrupt turns of humour, now silent and melancholy till she had passed a certain stone which held a memory for her. Anon she broke into some song of French origin:

> "Yestreen when the sun were setting
> And harvesters home were getting,
> I set me out on the road to Lannion
> With the devil for my companion,
> With the devil for my companion."

Recklessly the ditty rang out and at every turn the girl watched for the man who was to be scandalised. Finally she looped up the train of her dress through the crook of her left elbow and taking an arm of each, she strolled along flinging new verses of the "Road to Lannion" into the stillness of the air:

> "The devil was my companion
> On the long long road to Lannion,
> But behind came a Benedict father,
> A-sprinkling holy wather."

The Irish brogue which prevails all along the Scottish side of the North Channel enabled the rhymes of Lilias to pass muster, and in any case the singer was not particular. For at that moment Silver Sand came out of the shadow of the great ash trees which are the glory of Lochnaw, and with grave and decorous salutation passed them by.

Heathcote laughed aloud, "Speak of the devil and he appears," he cried, "all in black too and a black plume in his hat which cost something, I will wager, in Paul's Churchyard."

But Lilias had had enough of her play and now turned her disappointment on those who least deserved it.

"You, Hal Bruce," she said, "why do you stand there like a dumbstruck mooncalf? You are not so handsome that you can afford to look a greater fool than you are. And you, Mr. Heathcote, I pray you be not so quick to laugh at your betters, or he may condescend to give you a taste of his rapier's quality. The gentleman who passed——"

"Is a friend of Miss Lilias and a belted earl—the only one who is never seen in Holyrood or Whitehall!"

Hal Bruce was in his own opinion getting equal with Lilias for making a fool of him.

"He is of the peers of Scotland," said Lilias, who was not to be put down, "and a better man than you, Hal Bruce, a better soldier, and your master with every weapon from bare knuckles to rapier. Aye, and withal a better scholar than you or your Oxford master, Mr. Heathcote, and what is more, a better Parisian of Paris, trained at St. Sulpice and a friend of Madame de Belle Isle and our cousin of St. Lo. You do not know of whom you speak, and if I were a man I should call you a couple of sots and challenge you to fight! There!"

She flung away from them in a temper, leaving them standing planted like the supports of some vanished

escutcheon, facing one another. Her little feet padded rapidly down the path to the Castle and the green dusks of the wood hid her from view.

"And now," said Heathcote Lumley, with more pertinence than his remarks often showed, "you are the older friend of Miss Lilias. Will you kindly tell me what is the matter, and what we are supposed to have done?"

"I believe," said Hal Bruce with a sudden sad lucidity, "we may as well go home. We are wasting our time. That girl ran off to cry by herself."

"Nonsense," said Heathcote Lumley, "bless you, I know girls. At Oxford I was noted for it, and at Paris—but that I must confide to you over a bottle of Burgundy."

"You fool," burst out Hal Bruce, "I have a great mind to fetch you a buffet. Do you think your Paris tarts and college wenches give you a right to sit in judgment upon our Lilias? Only say so, Master Maudlin, and I will have the matter out with you now!"

"I meant nothing of the kind," said Mr. Lumley, "I am no braggart like some men we hear about, either in learning or arms, but I can take my own part in a quarrel or a debate, and when I fall, it is like a cat on all four feet. Ho, friend Bruce, where are you going? You are not thinking of deserting us?"

"I am going to the stables to order my horses. I am off to Windy Standard this very night. Why not come with me? Our noses are equally out of joint. Come, we shall agree yet! You shall teach me French, which seems the key to ladies' hearts in these days, and I will warrant you a little beef and much good mutton, the best of ale and such claret as you will not find in any gentleman's house in Galloway. We shall hunt the hare and shoot the birds over the moors, and what is best of all, there is not a woman under fifty about the place or within half-a-dozen miles of us!"

So under cloud of night the two took their leave of Lochnaw, leaving letters which declared urgent business as the reason for their sudden departure.

"What ill have you been doing, Jean Hay, my lass—you and your Lilias, that your gay young gallants fly the country at the first sight of me?"

"I wonder at you, Andrew," said his wife, with the easy reproach of one who fears no cause of serious offence, "and you an elder o' the Kirk! It's sitting there, judging the sins o' ithers, that does the mischief."

* * * * *

But outside under the cloud of night, while steeds were being mounted, letters of farewell penned hastily on stable corn-chests and sealed with a stirrup iron, Silver Sand pursued his way towards the little Loch of Lochnaw. His steps brought him unconsciously to the path through the ragweed and meadowsweet which led down to the point of Nevin's Isle, nor could he have put into words the motives which led him thither.

He had met Lilias with two young men. She was singing a gay song the chorus of which echoed in his ear:

"The devil was my companion,
On the long long road to Lannion."

Now Silver Sand was no precisian. He dressed gravely but his muse was rather gay than otherwise, and yet—and yet—he would have preferred not to have met Lilias with these two young men, and if sing she must, at least singing some other song. It did not for a moment cross his mind that the road, the walk, the supporting cavaliers, and the devil-may care *chanson,* had all been chosen expressly for his edification.

In spite of Juliana's spoiling of him during the months

of his marriage, Silver Sand was fundamentally a modest man. He never thought more highly of himself than he ought to think. Contrariwise indeed. So now among the defaced marvels of Nevin's dam-dykes and fortifications, he stood and looked up at the front of the Castle. He knew the window, already lighted, where doubtless Lilias's maid was arranging her night-gear. He saw the range of windows where the shadows of these good friends Sir Andrew and Jean Hay moved to and fro, gesticulating as they walked.

He felt singularly alone, and he listened for footsteps on the terrace and another burst of careless song. He must (he thought) hear the night wanderers returning. But instead he heard only the reeds shivering and the little silvery song of the water lapping at his feet.

He stood grave and sombre-thoughted as if he were in the aisle of a cathedral whence the worshippers were scattered, the bell silent, the priests of the mysteries withdrawn, but in which the scent of incense still lingers.

He might have been composing a requiem for his own soul, so solemn was he, so dead to curiosity, with the stern face of a prisoner who hears his sentence pronounced "For Doom."

At that moment the little peninsula which had seen Nevin Agnew's wildest pranks, and echoed to the mad songs of Lilias, seemed to him the saddest place in the world. The little smiling loch with its water lilies became a tarn, gloomy and fathomless.

He could see the yellowing sedges all round and the ripples came in soft and whispering over the shelving pebbles. But in his own mind Silver Sand stood like a timid bather on a shore as black as that of Lethe. Imagination is a noble gift, but he who has it must pay the price and Silver Sand had a long score to settle.

He heard the voices of the night speak to him, urging him to a desperate act, the only deed (they whispered),

fit for a man in his position. But over the marsh grasses of the Isle and from high above my lady's flower pots and flowering evergreens, through the open window of the chamber of Lilias, there came to his ear, clear and unmistakable, a child's cry in the night.

XXXVI

HIS EARTHLY FATHER

THE black water seemed to swirl about him. The voice of the child up there in the silence of the Castle moved him marvellously. He sat down on Nevin's dyke and kept his eyes upon the clear oblong of light high on the face of the Castle Tower.

He could not think with any sequence of ideas. He would think no evil of Lilias, that was certain, but the young man who had appeared so suddenly—might she not have met him and married him secretly in Paris? Both of them knew Madame de Belle Isle, than whom a more romantic matchmaker never existed. She might have kept it secret during the lifetime of Aunt Anne—or—a score of hypotheses swarmed in his mind—of all of which he would see the folly as soon as the morrow's light should have come.

But for that night, at least, the darkness had sway over Silver Sand, and there did not seem to be one single wise or good thing in all the world.

He heard the ringing of bridle reins and rapid beat of horses' feet on the avenue, the clanging of gates, and told himself that there was nothing strange in that. Lilias had merely fled with her lover! Yet even as he uttered the words he was conscious of their falsity. Nevertheless, he pleased his soul with imagined evil, and then was angry with himself that he should have created Lilias in his own image—"altogether such an one as thou art," he repeated, with some flash of his old training.

But still for all that, and to his own everlasting con-

tempt he would play the spy. No, after all she had not fled, she had merely let her lover go—because Sir Andrew had come to his own—("What a contemptible dog am I!"). Yes, he would watch. She had held the cup high with him but he would dash it to the ground—a babe in his niece's chamber in the Castle of Lochnaw—what would Sir Andrew say when he heard of that? ("Go, foul beast and blow your brains out as the sole honourable thing left for you to do!"). There was no more spirit in Silver Sand. He was not the man whom Juliana had known, the grave man of council beloved of Sir Andrew, the Dominie's model gentleman and scholar. Jealousy ran green and yellow in his veins, and he hated all who might persuade him that he was wronging Lilias. Yet as ever, one Silver Sand strove with the other. The true man knew the speaker of lies. One by one he nailed them down, as a merchant fastens a piece of bad money to his counter.

One Silver Sand despised the other, but then that other, sunk in an abasement of lying thoughts, did not care.

Where now is your high-mindedness? Where your tolerance? Can a child not cry in the night from the window of a great house, but you must blacken the very purity of God, which should be dearer to you than your own soul? Hold there, coward! If neither God nor man have weight with you, have faith at least in the purest of women.

So in a sudden fit of remorse Silver Sand was carefully withdrawing his foot from the little peninsula, where he had known so many emotions, when from the door of Lochnaw he saw two women glide out. They were mantled and hooded so that at first nothing as to their identity could be guessed from their faces or figures. But in a moment the instinct of the gipsy tracker came upon Silver Sand and he followed them, silent and soft as a wind-borne dandelion seed-feather.

He had no doubt that one of them was Lilias, for the lightsome carriage betrayed her. The other, a taller and heavier woman, carried with care and solicitude a white-wrapped bundle, and more than once she paused to draw the wrappings closer—as about a child's face.

Silver Sand was now more than ever determined to see the business to the end. He glided noiselessly from tree to tree, keeping well above the path and avoiding by instinct of woodcraft, the rotten branch in the under-growth and the dry twig underfoot which would snap with a sharp crack.

The hooded women struck into a side path which led to the wood forester's cottage—that of Joan McNoah, the Cameronian, who had sent his daughter at the peril of her life and his own, to provide for the needs of Mr. Walter Dunning, in his secret haunt of the Doocot Cave.

This astonished Silver Sand, because he knew that Elder McNoah and his wife would lend themselves to no unworthy business. In the woodland path the two women drew together and talked. Once Lilias, for now he could recognise the voice, offered to carry the child, but the other would not be parted from her burden even for a moment. They approached the cottage, and by the open door and comfortable light in the windows, Silver Sand could see that they were expected.

Mrs. McNoah, stout and rosy from her life among the breezy firs at the edge of the wood, held out her arms like one well accustomed, and eased the stouter woman of her burden.

They entered and Elder McNoah rose with a rugged face, kindly and solemn. He had taken on something of the wild wood, yet there was in his expression a note of high communion, which bore out his assertion that no man can know the woods who does not know the Lord. He had long been allowed to choose his own helpers and so, in the heart of his estates, Sir Andrew, prop of the Kirk, representative of the power temporal, cherished

the little knot of high-flying Society Men who owned no allegiance to any earthly king, and were ready to draw the sword whenever it seemed necessary to smite the armies of the alien.

But to-night John McNoah in his own house and welcoming his master's niece, was full of the milk of human kindness.

"Come your ways in, Miss Lilias, and bring ben the bairn. Though of pagan birth, he shall be blessed by a minister of the Word, and since I have no right to dictate my belief to others, Mr. Walter Dunning shall pour the water of baptism upon the child's head. I have sent my daughter Mirren to bring him. I know not what is keeping them. Ah—there—I hear them come. Mr. Dunning, sir, I am not of your Kirk, but I bow the head to a true servant of the Lord who has suffered for the cause."

"Brother John," said the minister of Parton, "you have made my sufferings light. I owe my life to you, and the bread that sustains it."

"Hoot, hoot," said the Cameronian, with a dry little smile, "what would I be doing giving succour to an Erastian? That would sort ill with my character. If ye will be thankin' somebody besides your Maker, thank the guid wife and wee Mirren there. Bless me, where is the lassie? She was here by your side when you entered. She is like quicksilver, or a glint o' April sunshine. Ye think ye hae her—ye put doon your hand and lo, she is not there! Yet she is a wise child at most times, which maketh a glad father."

"I must gratefully thank you and those whom God has given you, Elder McNoah," said the minister. "I have been laid aside by the brook Cherith and there in my solitude, angels ministered unto me. On the face of that heuch among the wind-battered rocks with only the great empty crying of the sea beneath me, I have flourished like a green olive tree in the house of my God.

That is your doing, John McNoah, and you cannot refuse the prayers of one who has no other riches!"

"Indeed I refuse no good man's prayer," said the Cameronian Elder. "The Lord knows I have need of them. But now, Mr. Dunning, before you proceed with your work, it is meet that you should break bread in my house, and also drink of the wine which makes glad the heart of man."

"Indeed, Elder John, I thank you, but we shall first receive this little one within the fold of the Christian Communion—I say not Church, friend John, and then after the work, we shall do well to accept of your hospitality, for bread strengtheneth the heart of man and oil maketh his face to shine."

"Aye, aye, ye are in the right, minister," said the Elder, "man goeth forth to his work and to his labour—until the evening, which is to say duties first and mercies afterwards. Where is that lassie, Mirren? The trees of the Lord are full of sap, but she is full of quicksilver. We shall not wait for her, but proceed to the first, or lesser sacrament."

The two women laid aside their cloaks, and all watched with a proud anxiety the behaviour of the child upon whom the waters of baptism were to descend "like dew on Hermon," as said the Elder.

Lilias and her companion, a buxom woman with the high colour of the hills in her cheeks, sat close together, conferring as to what they should do if the child cried.

"Och," said the experienced Mistress McNoah, "if the bairn greets just whammle him ower on his bit stammack. Maist o' mine got the water of reconciliation in the back o' their necks, and feint a bit the waur were they!"

The minister of Parton began his address to those present. He recalled the wonderful words of God concerning children—of whom could it be said that his heart was as the heart of a little child? Not the purest on

earth. Therefore the Most High would certainly look most favourably upon this little one—all the more that to present him before the altar of God, he had no earthly father——"

"Aye, but he has!" cried the triumphant Mirren, pushing forward Silver Sand, blinking from the outer darkness, where she had caught sight of him. *"This is him!"*

XXXVII

THE RAID OF LILIAS AGNEW

"HOW did it happen? That is a long story, but I shall tell it you if you will have patience."

Lilias and Silver Sand were seated under a great cedar tree in the policies of Lochnaw. The night had made peace between them, a peace which Silver Sand knew well enough that he must not disturb.

"I shall tell you, Silver Sand. I took a great responsibility upon me, but not greater than I can bear. I remembered your words how that the boy must not be brought up half gipsy, and half man-of-the-world. You were in Ireland. I could not consult you, and I do not think I should have done so in any case. For of all the men that I ever saw, John Faa, you are the least qualified to bring up a child. So I spoke to my Aunt Jean, and I went down with the little witch Mirren into the cave, passing among the rows of guillemots, gulls, and terns till we came to the Doocot, which Mirren and the minister keep as bright as a new pin. I laid the case before him and from what he said, I saw that the child would be better and safer with me, or in the house of Mistress McNoah than running the risks of perilous weather and dangerous folk up on your solitary mountains."

"But how did you get the child brought down?" Silver Sand asked, for he remembered Dame Elspeth of the "Star," a woman not at all commodious to deal with.

Lilias Agnew smiled a sweet far-away smile.

"Indeed at first I could not make up my mind. There were many difficulties. The woman at the 'Star' would listen to no reason. But I wrote to the red-wigged man

to whom we owed much during the ill days. I said that I desired the custody of my brother's child. I know not whether he believed me or not, but he rode to this house of Lochnaw, and talked with Forester McNoah, with his wife, and with me. I gathered that he did not think highly of the wife of the 'Star' and in the end I persuaded him to let me ride back with him——"

"You, Lilias, you rode all the way among the wild hills—for me."

"No," said Lilias demurely, "for my brother's son, as I have the honour of telling you. It was a glory of summer, and the gipsies said that the blessing was sure to come. For every night the sky was furrowed with fiery tracks of falling stars, and every morning the twilight broke from a fairer day, banks and fells in holiday of spring, the heather greening at the tip, the fields not yet shorn.

"They told me that the man by my side was no other than the Red Killer, but I had no fear. He was gentle and careful with me. He spoke much of you and of the foreign lands where he had wandered. I was never lonely and more than once, coming out to see the stars, I found him seated by the camp fire, a gun across his knees keeping watch. If he slew the two soldiers as they say—well, he did that also for my sake, and he is worth a thousand chattering jays such as come hither sometimes to fret me.

"At last, we came among the true hills, where ridge overlaps ridge, brown fades into purple, purple into blue, and blue into the sky. I remembered it was all your country and so I took heart. The men who came were your men and they knew for what purpose I had come.

"The Killer made me heartsomely welcome at the house of the Dungeon. He showed me the Loch and the island you used to love. He and all speak well of you, and nobly of her. I do not desire to give you pain, brother,

but the words made my heart proud. I rejoiced that the little son should have such a worthy mother.

"Then the Killer took a score of his men and we went to the house of the 'Star,' which lies very far out on the waste, at the foot of that strange rocky hill like a pyramid which lies across Enoch on the verges of Ayrshire. Only I was mounted, for the rest went faster than my pony could carry me. The Killer had looked with care to the arms of his men, and when I asked the cause, he said it was on account of a brother of yours, one Hector Faa, who had lately come from abroad and wished no good to you or the bairn. Is this true?"

"I have a brother Hector, the son of my father," said John Faa, "but I know almost nothing of him, or he of me. He has spent his life among the wild Hungarian gipsies who are of our kin."

Silver Sand's iron composure was never more remarkable. No one, not even Lilias, could have told how deeply he was touched by the appearance of his brother at such a juncture of affairs in the Faas country.

"We came to the house (Lilias continued) and found that as the Killer had said, the wife of the 'Star' was no ways willing that the bairn should depart. And as for Hector Faa, I saw him as I came in, a tall and insolent young man, dark and dangerous, with long hair and silver rings in his ears. He was well enough dressed, though in a strange style, with a doublet and hose all of velvet, silver buttoned and befrogged with many brandebourgs. He stood with his hands stuck into a great scarlet scarf of many folds which he wore wrapped about his waist. He was warming himself at the fire in the kitchen with a lordly air, and I could see that his gaze was by no means friendly.

"'Good day to you, wife,' said the Killer, in that soft voice of his which is almost like a girl's, 'we have come to take young John Faa to his father!'

"'I have heard no word,' said the wife of the 'Star,'

'let John Faa come and seek his bairn where he left him. He is here among his kinsfolk. This gentleman is Hector, his brother, newly come from fighting the infidel Turk at Belgrade. He will help me to tak' braw care o' the lad bairn till such time as his daddie comes to claim him.'

"'Elspeth McKitterick,' said the Killer in his most honeyed voice, 'can you not think of any reasons why you should do as I ask you? You are of my clan and people. I am your chief. But with some little thought you will perhaps stumble upon other reasons.'

"Then the big black man who had stood peacocking before the fire turned suddenly and pulling out a long dagger cried that he would not see Elspeth of the 'Star' put upon, and that whoever tried it should have to deal with him, Hector Faa, who had slain two Turkish Janissaries at one blow!

"I was watching the Killer. He seemed to grow little and light, and as if dancing upon his feet. His head was bent forward and slightly sunk between his shoulders.

"'Hector Faa,' he said, 'I have twenty men without who will see fair play. Come outside and try your weapon with me. I see you wear a rapier, you have a dagger in your hand. I think you will find it too long to be serviceable. But if you will honour me, we shall see if you can kill me as you killed the Turks——'

"'Or as you killed the soldiers,' retorted the dark man. 'No, thank you, Killer. I am not afraid of you, but I do not fight against such odds. If you fell, what would these twenty of your men do to me?'

"'That is what I was wondering myself!' said the Killer smiling, 'and for that reason (among others) I was counting on Elspeth there letting her daughter take a little trip over the hill into the shire. What say you, Bess? That the change of air will do you good! That's well spoken and like a brave lass. John Faa shall see to

it that you do not suffer and I pledge my word that you shall return when you will.'

"Hector Faa took a look as if he were minded to slay us all, but the Killer's men swarmed in till the house was full, and he made haste to put his dagger back in its sheath. They are not canny folk, these McKittericks. But for the Killer they would have stripped Hector of his magnificence as a herd peels a willow wand, and the big man felt that he was noways safe out of earshot of their chief.

"The boy was brought down from his chamber, and Bess declared that she was greatly content to go with us to the lowlands. So we left Hector Faa with his two or three outlandish men under the roof of Elspeth the spaewife. But the Killer, catching the greedy look of some of his men, swore that he would hang the first man who dared to plunder—that is, till he gave him leave. So with the Killer still riding or running, as the fancy took him, Bess and I brought the bairn home to Lochnaw, where we found Aunt Jean in a terrible taking, and speaking of nothing less than fitting out a party of Agnews to go in search of me.

"And there (concluded Lilias) that is all I know till I conveyed Bess and the bairn to Elder McNoah's cottage, and Mirren in the nick of time brought you in to hold the child up to the minister. There is nothing remarkable in all that—when once you know——"

"Except," said Silver Sand, quietly, "*why* you did it at all!"

XXXVIII

THE CHAPERON

THE home-coming of Sir Andrew brought a new spirit about the House of Lochnaw. The caves on the barren moors and the black spray-battered cliffs were cleared of their inhabitants. Some of these spent a day or two about the outbuildings of the Castle. But no one wished to bring any trouble upon the family, and all knew that Sir Andrew was a marked man, against whom a little evidence might work great mischief because of his great place and possessions.

So of their own accord they scattered silently among the farmers and cottiers with whom they could be unremarked and upon whom no government, however cruel, could levy fines.

Still Silver Sand abode with me at the school-house, but went every day to Lochnaw and every day also he called in to see Bess McKitterick at the forest cottage in the lee of the pines.

Never had I seen our Lilias so fair and smiling, so radiant of face, or so carelessly tossing such wayward tresses. She lost her pensive look. The babe seemed more and more to fill her heart, and there was mirth as well as contentment in her brimming eyes.

I would that I could say as much for Silver Sand, but he was never two hours of one humour, and many days he was hardly to be spoken to.

Again he would return in the gayest humour which, like a fire of whins, would soon blaze itself out, and leave his mood scorched and gloomy as before.

Sometimes he would hardly be persuaded to leave the dell of the school-house, where his grave silent figure always clad in black, with white lace at the neck only, and silver buckles at his knees, frightened the small scholar-people worse than my taws.

He sat so still and silent that he never seemed to move from the moment they entered school at nine till they came forth at noon. Yet some were favourites with him too, and oppressed him with requests to see his foreign watch, and the seals and trinkets he wore on a broad ribband attached to it. And he would smile and allow them to play with his few treasures till Mirren McNoah, who considered him as her own special property, arrived to drive them off, a small vehement fury darting here and there among the scholastic pines.

Then the two would march off together to some more distant glade. And indeed I was often glad to see them go, because I think the fiery child did the young man good, and he would listen to her childish prattle about the cottage and the comings and goings of Miss Lilias, when my newest and most jocose talk would leave him occupied and inattentive.

I knew from the first of Miss Lilias' quest to find Juliana's child, and how she meant to bring it down to milder climes and a more generous nurture. I judged the whole thing perfectly Quixotic, as indeed it was, but after consideration I said nothing. It certainly was no business of mine and—still more to the point, my opinion had not been asked—though I was to the full as well qualified to give advice as Mr. Dunning who had not one tenth of my knowledge of the family.

Still if I had been Silver Sand, I do not set up to be so modest a man that I would not have guessed what sent Lilias up among the hills, and why she brought down my son that he might be the better educated.

Yet Silver Sand's modesty came nearer to the truth. For the truth was finer and more delicate than any man

could guess or, of his own divining put into words. I had the facts from Mistress McNoah and I regret that my habit of reading and writing the English only, prevents me from giving its full force to the fine Scots in which she conveyed it to me.

"Ye see," she said, "this is the gait o't. My wee leddie was feared. Oh, no' for hersel' she wasna feared—though she might well hae been. But she was feared for him—*wha's 'him'?* What should it be but Silver Sand? And brawly ye ken it. Ye werena born on the Sabbath, dominie! Well, Lilias was feared for Silver Sand, and that he wad be thinkin' and thinkin' aboot her—till a day cam' when he would throw his bonnet between the mill-stanes, and she would hae to send him aboot his business. For (says she) it wad be an unseemly thing for ony man to be thinkin' aboot another woman and the grass scarce green abune his first wife's grave. Oh, I ken he had to mairry her whether he would or no, but I'm tellin' you what Miss Lilias was thinkin'. Ye can put in the excuses and explanations for yoursel', as I ken ye will be gleg to do!

"'But,' thinks she, 'if I have the bairn there by me, close under my hand, *I can manage him.* The bit thing that is his ain flesh and blood will keep minding him o' Juliana. Men forget soon, but not so soon as that, and whenever I see words that are better unspoken trembling on his tongue, or the look in his e'e, I shall e'en propose a walk through the woods to see the bairn!' Noo, was that no' clever o' Miss Lilias? She made—that is the Frenchified word she used—a *'chaperong'* o' the puir wee mite. I dinna suppose ye see even noo, dominie, hoo clever it was o' her, and the plan is workin' juist somethin' marvellous! Cruel?—Havers, dominie, juist havers! That comes o' never having been married yoursel'. Silver Sand is a man, and when ye are garrin' a man behave onything and everything is fair, I'm only feared that she will let him aff ower easy. In this war

there is nae truce. If she doesna best him and keep him bested, he will win in upon her. For a woman's heart is a puir feckless thing and the only safe way wi' a man, is never to let him get a sicht o' it!"

I answered Mistress McNoah that she was very likely right, but that all the benefits appeared to be on the side of Miss Lilias—whereas I was also concerned for my friend Silver Sand.

She gave me a curious look and shook her head, smilingly, but with something of contempt.

"Ye are weel matched, the pair o' ye—yin kens as muckle as the ither, and that's a God's blessing!"

Nor would she explain more fully, bidding me in an extremely vulgar phrase, which I was surprised to hear from so respectable a woman, to "go and scart my fit!"*

Then she took her way homeward, because (she said) it was a responsibility to have a young bairn in the house, with only that wild hill filly Bess McKitterick, and her own young ne'er-do-weel, Mirren, to look after the bit thing.

The which, being interpreted, meant that Mistress McNoah had given her evidence in chief and did not mean to let herself be cross-examined thereon. At any rate, sure it was that she went her way smiling in the direction of the forest cothouse of which she was so firm and worthy a mistress.

That very day her husband came earlier to supper, and she could see by the ply between his eyes that he had come across something that pleased him little. But Mistress McNoah knew a great deal better than to pester her lord with questions. If she did, he would only bid her attend to the broth-pot, and stride out of the house. But by little thoughtfulnesses and silent forestallings of his desires, she knew how to smooth that V-shaped

*A phrase used in Galloway to express contempt for any very useless occupation.

mark, and that before they slept that night, he would pour out his whole trouble into her wise and wifely ear.

It fell out even as she had foreseen. The ease and warmth of the cottage soothed John McNoah. The child was asleep, and the nurse, Bess McKitterick, had slipped away to breathe the fresh air. Miss Lilias had been accompanied homeward by Mirren, so they had the cottage among the pines of the Sheriff's knowe to themselves. Then John McNoah spoke.

"This day at the corner of the Tinker's Hollow, I came on a tribe that troubled me sair. Gipsies they were, but like none that ever set foot on this estate of ours. Yet I do not like to trouble Sir Andrew. He would flee into one of his passions and speak of hunting them down like mad dogs—never thinkin' that we are not now in the braw days of the Hereditary Sheriffdom!"

"What like were they, John?" his wife put in, as quietly as if he had been telling her of some neighbour lads he had seen at kirk or market.

"There was a great black foreign-looking man with ringlets like a woman, and a nose that minded me o' Silver Sand."

"That would be his brother Hector, a dangerous loon. I was hearin' Miss Lilias speakin' aboot him only yesterday. Had he a sash aboot his waist?"

"The same," quoth John McNoah, bringing down his hand with a crash, "to think that you should ken and no me, that am paid for the like!"

"And the others—were they beribboned and besashed like the big man?"

"Not they, mistress, they were more like Irish harvesters without their reaping hooks—shock-headed and black-haired—as black as sloes, and the e'en set in their heads like currants in a gingerbread rabbit."

The good wife, completely posed this time, could only shake her head and advise that her John should step over to the dominie's the first thing in the morning and con-

sult Silver Sand. He would know if anybody knew, and he might have authority to send the rascals about their business.

"I doubt it much," said the guidman, "they looked more like desperate Irish reivers or Heelant catherans, broken by their own clan, outlawed by their own name and people. They were setting up a band of their own, as I guessed at the matter. Why, I had hardly spoken to them, and that only to ask what was their business upon my grounds, before they had a brace of pistols at my head. The tall man with the shiny black ringlets that ye guess to be Hector Faa made no sign, but looked on with a sneer that frightened me far worse than the pistols."

He was silent a moment, and then added: "There must be some ill-work going forward, which would bring three rascals of that stamp to the Tinker's Hollow, without camp equipage or women folk at eleven o'clock of a brisk forenoon. And then for a question, which it was my bounden duty to put—pistols flashing out and pointed at an honest man's head. I told them plainly, if they would put aside these brimstone trinkets, that I, though a man of peace, would try a fall with any one of them upon the green grass."

"Oh, John," cried his wife, "and after what you promised good Maister Peden about the weapons of the flesh."

"Deed, guid wife, I have never been a Passive Resister where tyranny was concerned. Both thieves wearing crowns and thieves wearing blue bonnets and leather jerkins I will resist in my master's interest. But after two-and-forty years it came hard on a man to take down his flag and go his ways without coming to grips—which is what I had to do."

That night John McNoah slept not at all. He summoned a couple of his aides from their shakedowns at the stables, and the three of them, aided by Mirren in

one of her mother's short petticoats, cleaned and loaded guns, which they placed on racks ready to their hands.

Then John McNoah kept watch till midnight, when he gave place to Dickin Telford, and at four Dickin Telford yielded to Nick McKerrow, who was still patrolling when the good wife arose. Then ten minutes later John McNoah sat him down on the edge of a settle to pull on the leathern gaiters. Indeed, he was never seen without them in the woods of Lochnaw, for he cherished and pruned the plantations with his own hands. They were his work and as dear to him as his own children.

The thought that foreign rascaldom was abroad among them unchecked, most likely lighting fires and causing damage, was enough to banish sleep had he been ever so weary.

He turned out of the cottage without a word, only with a single well understood gesture, bidding Dickin Telford and Nick McKerrow to stay where they were. This time he took a brace of pistols in his belt and a gun over his shoulder. He would not be caught napping a second time, thoough he was only going along Mirren's path to the dominie's house of Leswalt.

I was up among the hens in the yard when I saw him come. John McNoah and I were good friends. I never harmed his birds or interfered with his young plantations. These he planted in the new English manner described by Evelyn in his *Sylva,* which he had used in the nurture of the Sheriff's woods since 1664, when Sir Andrew's father brought him a copy fresh bought in Paul's Churchyard.

John and I did not agree as to the bickering of sects. For I stood for the established order, and he was the bluest blood of the Covenant. But in all that concerned the well-being of any decent living man in the parish, he knew that I was to be trusted to do my best, both in the matter of conveying early intelligence to the Wanderers

and in the more subtle business of misleading the man-hunting ruffians of the neighbouring garrisons.

"I came to see Silver Sand," he announced, as soon as he was within hearing, and when I had indicated where my young guest was likely to be found, in a glade where he often paced up and down in meditation, I went on busying myself with the business of my little garden. For I had risen early in order to sweep out the school house, which (to her shame) Mirren McNoah had neglected to do for me the night before, though regularly paid a silver shilling a week by the parish for so doing. But as she very impertinently informed me, she had undertaken to clean a school and not a poultry roost, I could not find it in my heart to object. For indeed my chickens and their ancestors, male and female, had always perched on the cross beams of the school-house, and resorted thither regularly as soon as the last belated scholar, "kept in" for unlearnt lessons, had at length been liberated.

The Cameronian chief-forester met Silver Sand, and they greeted one another soberly as became men of weighty business and rare discourse. John McNoah told what he had seen in the Tinker's Hollow, and how the two with the sloe-black eyes had set a pair of pistols to his head, while the tall ringletted man looked mockingly on.

"There is no doubt as to the last," said Silver Sand, "it is Hector Faa and no other. The two with the pistols are somewhat more difficult to trace. I have my suspicions about one of them, a stoop-shouldered, frosty-polled man such as you describe, might point to a fellow whose life is forfeit in Scotland, one Grey Roger——"

"What," exclaimed the forester, "not the murderer of Lidgett Sylvester?"

"Hush," said Silver Sand, "you a woodcraft man,

and speaking out your mind like that, for any lurking eavesdropper to overhear!"

"There is not cover within a mile to hide a crow," quoth John McNoah, "and besides you took me by surprise."

"Let us sit down and talk the matter over. Lay aside your gun. I will venture that no pistols shall be fired in this glade while we hold council."

The two men seated themselves and looked down the forest glade—John McNoah, to whom each branch and shoot and sprout, each knot and the thickening of each bole was familiar, and also Silver Sand, who saw only the deep green above, the blue haze of the distance, and the dance of motes in the slant sunshine as the sun began to rise in the East.

"What we have to find out is what brings these three rascals together—two (as is likely) from Ireland, and the third, my brother Hector, from his comfortable howf by the fireside of Elspeth McKitterick at the House of the 'Star.'"

"The Irishmen have followed Sir Andrew over, knowing well that he is here in some danger of his life, with intent to sell him to those persecuting villains, the Grahams!"

"No, forester," said Silver Sand, "I do not deny that Grey Roger is capable of that, as he is of every other villainy. But Roger could not move against Sir Andrew without putting his own neck into the halter-noose. Besides he would see his money down before he took the risk—and now, who is to pay him? The plot lies deeper, and be sure that my brother is in it. He is far more subtle and dangerous than swashbucklers like Grey Roger. It is not your young plantations nor yet your master's liberty that are threatened, but some scheme which we cannot yet fathom! What else would have brought Hector Faa back from Hungary, where the gipsies are still a power, and the son of the Lords of

Little Egypt can claim a name and a place among the highest."

The forest-guard remained silent.

"I do not forget (Silver Sand added thoughtfully) that Hector is the gipsy out and out—far more so than I—deeper read in the mysteries, having never given his mind to any other subject, and doubtless consumed with the burning jealousy of a younger brother. More than that I cannot guess, and perhaps even so I do him wrong."

XXXIX

THE LAST PERVERSITIES OF LILIAS

LILIAS went lightly between Castle and cottage, dreaming of no danger, but full of peace and the feeling of safety which is so sweet after numberless distempered days. She could again flash through the gamut of sensibilities each time she encountered Silver Sand. She had no fear of him now. The barrier she had so cunningly reared was between them, and she could be as wild and wilful as ever she had been in the days when they met on Nevin's Isle.

"Do you remember," she said smiling, "the night we spoke in whispers because Uncle Andrew and Aunt Jean were bidding sweethearts' adieux as though they were only eighteen years old, and had not been wedded a week?"

Silver Sand trembled. Did she remember that it was that night my lady had come upon them standing silent, hand in hand, the west all a golden glory about them and the deep and solemn ash trees, high as a cathedral, whispering down strange things to them as they stood, soul-joined, on the sedgy brink of that lagoon.

Yes, Lilias thought of these things. She felt the touch of Silver Sand's arm against her shoulder as they took their way along the narrow woodland path. But though it thrilled her, that light pressure, though her heart responded to the deep murmur of the wind among the trees, she lingered, rejoicing that she dared to enjoy the situation.

What after all did she risk? At any moment she could catch her dress, hold it high at the side, and offer

to race him to the forester's cottage. The baby—Juliana's baby had need of her.

So deceiving herself thus, Lilias' courage, her lightness of heart, returned to her. She was treading on dangerous ground, she knew, but the process was an interesting one, and in all ages has been popular with women. Eve, no doubt, began by wondering how far she could go—safely, of course—with the serpent. There is not the least doubt but that Lilias found the interest of her walks to and fro much increased—still less that, in common with all such experimentalists, she imagined a vain thing—to have and not to have at the same time.

The immunity of Lilias lay not at all in the insensibility of Silver Sand, for he felt the change of her treatment of him with the exquisite delicacy of his feeling for moods of the mind which characterised him. But he did not divine the reasons of Lilias—what man could? Besides his mind was filled with the dangers which surrounded Sir Andrew and all at Lochnaw.

For the defence of a house, for a battle in the open against odds nothing better could be imagined than the trained Society Men. But there was no denying that they tramped up and down like bullocks, and that their value as spies was small. Yet, Silver Sand must give no sign of taking alarm. He must go and come with his old freedom though his life was every moment in peril. He might move among ambuscades, yet he turned aside at the sight of a flower blooming in a dusky covert, a peony hid amid the shrubbery, its brilliant bloom burning a hole in the cool grass never swept by the scythe.

Also he was left a great deal to Lilias. Sir Andrew needed him every day and often many times a day. So that he fell into his former habit of dining at noon in the hall of Lochnaw, where he had the advantage of listening to a short grace before meat from Mr. Walter Dunning, and a long returning of thanks from Mr. Prophet

Peden—Sir Andrew had arranged this precedence on philosophic grounds.

"A man can listen better to a long 'say-away' wi' his victuals comfortably under his belt than reekin' under his nose!"

The Sheriff's authority had not yet been given back though nothing had been heard of David Graham, and as for John, his brother, he was in London, where in that place of treasons and divided councils, he found himself not at all the great man he had been in Scotland. He had indeed got himself made into "Bonny Dundee," and confirmed in all his grants and claims to other people's property. But so far as Galloway was concerned, all that we asked was that he should stay bonnily out of it —a prayer which seemed like to be granted, for storms were gathering about the head of those cruel men, James Stuart and John Graham, who had made bloodshedding their pastime and hatred their daily bread.

"We have come forth of the fire not unscathed, Silver Sand," said Mr. Walter Dunning. "But now we are steel and no longer iron. Our feet have come far and are not unbruised. But still we are near the goal. The lark mounts high in the meadows, but he sings not so loud, nor towers so high as our hopes."

He was speaking of the coming of the Prince of Orange, and Sir Andrew who though persecuted, had never fancied it possible that any other king should reign, showed himself no little shocked. Events were however moving a little too fast for him, and in his nightly consultations with Jean Hay, he had even uttered the most subversive and revolutionary sentiments that whosoever was worthy to yield the power was the real king, a definition which Jean Hay reminded him would make Cromwell no usurper.

"Well," answered Sir Andrew. "I shall go with the Estates and the Parliament of Edinburgh. It would ill become me at my time of life to be riding with ill-faured

Grahams, and so far as I can hear, King James will have no other friends in Scotland, an' it be not a wheen raggetty clansmen out o' the wild North, where they never had as muckle religion as wad fill a tobacco pipe!"

* * * * *

Meantime, Silver Sand and Lilias walked abroad, content and joyous as devotees in the sunshine of a Sainted Morning. Their lonely season, sunless, frost-bitten, mist-wrapped, had wonderfully passed away. New horizons were opening out upon the mind of Lilias, glorious visions which she dared not acknowledge even to herself. Still the brightness on her face was reflected like an after-glow on his also—and he was glad he knew not why.

He knew that the demons of discord still walked the earth, but when Lilias reached him her hand at the stile, he forgot everything evil and dangerous at the touch of her fingers, and walked on by her side, his head knocking against the skies and his feet quite unconscious of touching the earth.

They did the maddest things—yet most of which indirectly contributed to their safety. They drove the wild goats from John McNoah's plantations, shepherding them down towards the sea coast where they would find no young tree-tops to nibble. They sat on fallen trees till the sun dropping into the west said to them (having pity, because he had seen so many in their case): "Arise, my fair ones and come away!"

One day of soft breathing airs and bird cadences, Lilias and Silver Sand sat together watching one little cloud, all white, drift across the sky and disappear. It was a warm pale blue sky such as comes in Scotland only with the finest weather. They were far enough out on the dunes to be safe from all intrusion, near enough to the sea to hear its moaning and blind groping, always restless and unquiet, at the foot of the steadfast cliffs.

They were near enough to the woods to see them lie out half hidden by a dusky bloom of mist, which at times the sun made iridescent and unreal as the veil of some divine bride.

Lilias broke his dream and her own by asking suddenly: "What did she call you?"

"*She*—who?"

"You know that I mean Juliana—what did she call you?"

"She called me John—John Faa!"

"Then I shall call you Silver Sand."

The wind sang among the rippled corn down on the Sheriff's holms, the minister's hay-pasture, and the dominie's herb-garden, and there was nothing to tell that a watershed had been passed upon the hills of Time.

She was silent for full five minutes after this, but her eyes were dark blue like the sapphire of a short summer night when the sky never really blackens. It was a sign with Lilias that she was moved in deep places far removed from her light everyday merriment of behaviour.

"Tell me if you loved her very much, Silver Sand?"

He bent his head towards the white foamy drawl of the surf as if that league-long voice would help him to answer. Then he sat up and squared his shoulders. He would not be a coward just in the place where most men are.

"Yes, I loved her—not at first, perhaps, but afterwards."

Lilias snatched at and captured a vagrant dandelion plume which was balancing itself uncertainly before her, the sport of light sweet airs, which came in puffs off the sea. Then she launched her interrogatory.

"She made you love her, though not at first. Tell me how?"

"Lilias, is this fair?—Is this worthy?"

"Tell me how she made you love her, when you did not —at least you say you did not!"

There was a rising inflection in the sentence which indicated temper rising above the normal—and that rapidly.

"No man can tell such things. Women should understand——"

Lilias drove the heel of the little shoe deep into the sward.

"Tell me," she commanded. "I want to be told. I must hear. I must know!"

Now a more loyal and conscientious man than Silver Sand did not live, and all his long history affirms him to have been bravest where all were brave, but this was too much for him.

"You ask me the impossible," he answered, firming his voice. "You propose a treachery to a true man. But because you are Lilias Agnew I shall try and satisfy you. Juliana made me love her because when I loved her not at all—she took my very indifference as a precious gift. Each look I cast upon her, were it in the bygoing, she thanked me for with a smile. She took my careless alms as if they had been a king's dowry!"

"Then she had no spirit," snapped Lilias, her eyes sparkling. "I wonder you could bear a spiritless woman. She was not even jealous, you say!"

"To-day Juliana has no spirit in her body. She is dead!" said Silver Sand pensively. "It is true she was patient with me and though she knew what she knew, she was not jealous. But I have yet to learn that that is a fault."

"It is a fault in a loving woman," cried Lilias snatching handfuls of the grass here and there about her and flinging them towards the cliff.

"It was no fault in Juliana," said Silver Sand gravely. "She had made her bargain before marrying me accord-

ing to our laws, and she kept her faith to the end. God give us all strength to do as much."

"You have not yet answered my question; how did she make you love her?"

"By loving me—no man could help it," said Silver Sand suddenly firing up at the girl's injustice, or what seemed like it. "Juliana Stanley loved me at first sight, and being a virgin, used the privilege of her people and 'asked' for me as her husband. A man asleep does not awake so quickly as that. I had put women from me as so much uncertain April weather—'fickle mind, unstable heart' so I counted them. I found I was wrong. She showed me."

"She spoilt you, you mean," said Lilias. "She made herself your slave. She hewed wood and carried water for you!"

"I admit the water," said Silver Sand. "But I deny the other. I it was who cut the wood, and I bear the marks of the task to this day, where the axe missed the branch and hit my toe!"

"I would bow to no man's caprice!"

"Juliana taught an idle fellow his duty by doing her own," Silver Sand went on. "And now she might well teach you yours, Mistress Lilias."

"Teach me my duty—she!" the little lady's lip curled. "I have never been taught that by any that live."

"So much is evident," said Silver Sand, very low. "But you may listen with better grace when the dead come forth to teach you!"

Lilias started and looked shudderingly around. But the face of the dunes was bare, the sky bent reassuringly above and beneath the incoming tide began to rattle the pebbles.

"She never spoke or thought ill of any," he proceeded, for he felt his advantage instinctively. "Not even when she knew that I had met you, and loved you at first sight,

as she had done me—and for the same reason, because I could not help it."

"She knew that—and it made no difference?"

"None that I know of. She would have given me up. You know how she pleaded with you—to deaf ears."

"One was deaf," said the girl, smiling perversely through a tear. "The other heard only too well."

"Yes, Juliana knew and it made her only the braver and the more true. It is a strange world, and women are the strangest things in it. But I loved her more and was kinder to her, after she knew about my feeling for you than ever before."

"And you expect me to believe in your love for me?"

"I do—so much the more that a woman has died to prove it."

"Ah," wailed Lilias suddenly clasping her hands about his arm. "You should not have said that! I am a thankless, jealous, ill-tempered minx, quite unworthy of you, and not worthy to tie Juliana's shoe strings, but I never needed any other woman dead or alive to tell me that you loved me. How did I know? As I know whether the day be wet or fine. 'Loves me not!'—I take my cloak and pass my way. 'Loves me'—the sun is shining, the air is warm, my heart glows. I pout out my lips and whistle a tune. Then I take my sprigged gown, hold it out daintly—so—and dance a minuet."

XL

THE THREE BAD MEN

MEANWHILE the three outlaws outside drawn together by a kind of association of evil, were perfecting their plans and already squabbling about after-profits. Doran of Killibegs, the simple brigand, could be satisfied with a few score of the ringing Magyar gold pieces which Hector Faa had brought with him from Buda-Pesth, the city of fair, frail women.

It was another matter to content Grey Roger, who had cruel instincts and wanted revenge as well as money. He was entirely willing that Silver Sand should die. He was altogether too well dressed. He had an air of command that irked the tribal outcast. He had overcome him with his eye and taunted him with his crimes. It would be sweet to make him suffer—he the chief of Egypt, who made himself so secure in his place and power. A little torture even would be grateful to Grey Roger's feelings—and that maid with the yellow locks, Silver Sand was vulnerable there. It was a pity Hector was the man's brother. With one or two of his own stamp they might amuse themselves well.

Now for his part Hector Faa hated his brother, and wished his death, not foreseeing that after a long life in which crime lay nested in crime like a China puzzle, they two should die together fighting in a good cause, the untarnished honour of the elder ransoming the younger's dishonour.

But they were both young men then, and had long life before them. One had much good, the other much evil to get through before it was time to make their

excuses to life and take their leave not wholly unfraternally.

But just as this moment Hector Faa desired his brother's place and honour, the inherited hoards of generations of gipsy captains. He had come back from Hungary with some experience of the Turkish wars, a vast opinion of himself, an overweening ambition, and the most perfect unscrupulousness. But—he gave Grey Roger to understand that he would have no superfluity of cruelty. A clean knife stroke and a toss over the cliff edge he had no objection to. That was why he was there, but, for the rest—well, if Grey Roger tried any tricks or made any trouble behind backs, he would find that his throat was as easily cut as another man's—as he, Hector Faa, would soon prove to him.

Grey Roger knew enough of his leader's desperate reputation to hold his tongue. He was something of a hand with the knife himself, but from the brief, fierce lesson he had had of the fate of the unknown Bedlington man whose grave he had helped to dig, he did not propose to match himself with the cadet of the House of Egypt. Still, he comforted himself with the thought that something might be done without Hector Faa's knowledge, and Doran as a son of the glorious slaying of '41, could be trusted to assist in the wringing of Protestant nerves as well as the spilling of Protestant blood.

The three lay among the tall bearded grass and plotted, each advising or criticising in turn, though it was only Hector Faa whose decision counted at the last. They knew a kind of happiness too, dreaming an evil man's dream of success, and as they looked upward, each biting at the succulent ends of the grasses, they had some vague idea that Heaven smiled upon their projects!

It is a mistake to think that bad men have no religion. They may be deaf to Lord's prayer and holy psalm. They keep no count of Paternoster and Ave. But they

have a natural sense that it is God's bounden duty to make the world a pleasant place for them. And if He fails in this his manifest business, it is theirs to do it for Him. Hence the sudden tightening of many halters and good King's dues paid to Jack Ketch.

The mission of these three was plain death, yet a booming bee in the broom bush would distract them. They rose together and threw cudgels and stones at a pattering rabbit or a timid hare. For, barring their rascality, villains are wont to behave amazingly like honest men—a fact which makes them as inexplicable for the philosopher as it is disturbing and unsatisfactory to the thief-taker.

When the time for action should arrive Doran was the man in whom they had confidence. His face and figure were unknown in the countryside. He had his own accent which was that of one of the many thousand of Irish reapers passing through to reap the harvests of the rich English fields. There was nothing of the gipsy about him. It was at least a possible thing that John McNoah might give him a shakedown or a chaff bed in his barn. All depended on the temper in which he might be found, and as to that they must run their chances. The shooting of Silver Sand presented no insuperable difficulties. He went about like a chief among his clan, the lord of his own domain.

They must, of course, choose their hour, but thereafter as unquestioned heir of Egypt, Hector Faa would enter into its rights and revenues. These were known to be considerable, for the new methods brought to perfection by Juliana, had been continued by her father in the South and by Chief McKitterick in the North. Hector saw no difficulty. He would take all into his own hand, and he would know how to make up to Smith Stanley and the McKitterick for the loss of their positions as middlemen. He had overcome far greater difficulties in Hungary, where in the name of Faa he had dealt with

a people infinitely stronger and more difficult than these scattered tribes. He had warred with the Turk even to the walls of Belgrade. He had shaken his curled locks in the great mosque of Adrianople, where the dust of many warlike caliphs lies, and where his life would not have been worth a groat's purchase if the bearded Turk had known him for an infidel.

They sat about and listened, Doran open-mouthed with admiration of the travelled man, but Grey Roger too ignorant and mean a villain to believe that any man could do the things Hector Faa said he had done. He smiled furtively as he whetted his knife, and foresaw that when Hector was chief of the Faas, he would have to pay sweetly for his silence. Grey Roger was never a man to forego an advantage, and here was this braggart giving away names and places, a knowledge of which would be invaluable when it came to a settlement of accounts. So, feeling his importance increasing every moment Hector spoke, his demands rose with the information at his command. He did not stop to think that if Hector spoke the truth he was not the sort of man to suffer a blackmailer gladly. Or that, if he were a liar of that force, he must be a man still more dangerous.

* * * * *

Now a man in Galloway is more cautious whom he receives into his barns and byres of a Saturday night than on the other nights of the week. Sabbath began in Old Testament fashion at six o'clock on Saturday evening, and any wanderer received after that became "the stranger within thy gates," and could not on any pretext be turned away before the morning of Monday. Otherwise the master of the house would not only be abetting—he would be directly responsible, for "Sunday travelling!"

So when Doran presented himself with his reaping-hook over his arm at the gate of the little enclosure of McNoah's cottage, the good wife looked at him mistrust-

fully, and said that he must bide till the good man came in out of the wood, whereupon Doran sank down with so wearied an air that Mistress McNoah, touched to the heart, sent out Nurse Bess with a bowl of broth. Open the barn-door on Saturday night she dared not, because she was one of those women who unfeignedly fear their lord. But outside the gate a bowlful of good mutton-broth would put life into the weariful Irish papist, and, perhaps, even so little might be counted to her for righteousness.

Presently John McNoah came stepping masterfully forth from his woods, a billhook, weapon of his profession, over one shoulder, where it made as brave a show as any bayonet. Doran cringed before him, as even chiefs of the Irishry soon learned to do.

John eyed him narrowly.

"Stand up and say your *Ave!*" he commanded. "It is a popish prayer, but if you are an Irelander you will know it. Good! Now what does your priest ask you when you go to confess? Very well, so far. Now let me hear you say 'thirty-three men of force and arms'."

"Tirty-tree men av forrce and arrums!" said Doran promptly.

"Come your ways, Teague," said the forester, "you were never reared on this side of the Irish Channel, and the rest of what you say may be true. At any rate you are welcome to a straw bed in my barn, and bite and sup from my table—of which, if you abuse or have any evil thought, the Lord of the Sabbath have mercy on your soul."

And with this brief warning he led the way into the steading. He unlocked the door and left the *sorner* within.

"I am cowld, that I am," whimpered Doran, who was anxious to get a look at the internal arrangements of the cottage, which he had not had time to discuss with Bess of the "Star."

"Hoots," said John McNoah, bending his brows, "a fine simmer nicht as ever was, and you will get your kite full of steaming parritch in half an hour. Meantime there lies a pile of barley sacks in the corner. Help yoursel', or better still, take the axe and split the good wife's kindling wood for her morning fire. That will warm you the better—keep at it till the sweat breaks, and then betake yoursel' to the barley sacks. The parritch will be sent to you at six exactly, and after that you mind that you are to behave yoursel', as becomes an Elder's house on the Sabbath Day!"

The meal was brought in a large wooden "bicker" bound externally with broad rings of brass, but to Doran's grave disappointment it was not Bess the nurse who brought the "cogie" but Mistress Mirren, who stood and asked him questions of the most embarrassing character, as she watched him sup his porridge and milk.

"Where's the big black man wi' the rings in his ears?" Thus she opened point-blank fire at him from a distance of a couple of yards.

"What black man? I do not be knowing any man wid rings in his ears. 'Tis Jock, the bull, you will be thinkin' av, and faith, he wears his in his nose, for I saw it when he chased me across the Park, where I lost me bundle, three shirts and a pair av ruffled frills."

Doran thought he could get off under cover of a jest, but he did not know the sleuth-hound tenacity of Mirren on the track of information.

"Do not burden your soul with lies—you have been about the country with the big black man. You made tracks like a drove of horses running the grass in fly time—a blind man might have followed you with the point of his kent!"

"'Twas another man entirely—so it was, darlint, asserted Doran, making the sign of the cross. "Indeed I am only new come ashore from Mike O'Flannigan's boat, that do be lyin' off Port Logan at this very minute.

And the divil fly away wid my sowl if it is not the God's truth I'm tellin' ye. Is it likely that I would be askin' shelter in your father's barn if I was aught but what your father called me—a poor papish Teague, trotting the bogs to cut the harvests he will never eat?"

Mirren was daunted by such assurance, and felt that it would be ungenerous to press the guest farther. She still thought that the man lied, but she was no longer so confident as to mention the matter to her father—which, if she had done, would have made a great difference to Doran of Killibegs the Donegal "scraun," and a still greater difference to this story.

XLI

IN GASH GABBIE

THE night was cold and a little whiffling wind blew off the sea, when the gable window of Forester McNoah's cottage was cautiously opened. The hinge, which creaked a little, had had to be eased with such grease as all good nurses carry.

"Mind you," whispered Bess of the "Star," "I am to take the bairn back to my mother, and no harm is to be done to either of us. No, I will not give you John Faa's son to hold. Let me have the money first, I tell you."

Good coined gold clinked pleasantly in the darkness, and then slowly through the window came something strange and misshapen—Bess of the "Star" scrambling out backwards, and the babe clasped to her bosom. Three shadows waited upon her anxiously, guiding her feet so that she should not scrape the wall, and letting her gently down lest she should awaken the child. But John Faa the younger had just been suckled and slept the sleep of contented repletion.

"Quick now, hurry with them," whispered Hector Faa. "It is high tide, and O'Flannigan will be able to stand close in. Do not come back till they are both on board."

Bess of the "Star" was hurried away into the silence of the wood, where the dews of a clear sky were falling pitter-patter in big solid drops like the beginnings of a thunderstorm.

The pleasant freshness, the regular movement, caused the babe on Bess's shoulder to sleep profoundly. Bess

of the "Star"—a stupid woman, of a slow hulking nature —yielded herself to Doran and Grey Roger. They were soon out on the fragrant slopes of thyme and heather, and anon came out upon the yellow sands. A boat grated within a cable's length, and without a word Doran and Grey Roger joined hands, and carried Bess and her charge on board, wading waist deep into the slow heave of the tide. Bess was passed down by strong hands to her place in the bottom of the boat, and in a few minutes afterwards a lantern was lowered from a ship riding at anchor under the rocks of the Black Head, a windlass clanked, and Bess of the "Star" and her charge were lost to the ken of any in Galloway for years—though among the black blood of Egypt there were always to be found those who kept the pair under observation. So, in spite of the interference of Lilias, the son of Juliana Stanley and John Faa was fated to be brought up among gipsies where they are strongest and most unmixed, which is to say on the great Hungarian levels—a tzigane among the tziganas.

* * * * *

It was a strange Sabbath morn which broke over the Leswalt valleys, and many of the most faithful never saw the inside of a Kirk that day. From the elder's house in the wood Bess of the "Star" and her charge were missing—snatched mysteriously away from a guarded house. By eight of the clock a search party was riding straight across the northerly moors towards Loch Moan and the Dungeon of Buchan.

But there was something still graver to relate, which caused Sir Andrew himself, on his way to the public worship of his parish Kirk, to turn about and ride as rapidly as his horse could carry him to the house of Nathan Crogo, Dominie in Leswalt.

The report which had met him like a blow in the face was that Silver Sand had been killed in his chamber in

the schoolhouse, that his body had been dragged across the dunes to the nearest heuch, whence it had been dumped into the tide, which at the hour of midnight, or half an hour afterwards, would be at the full.

There was some measure of truth in this report—altogether too much for my peace of mind. For I had to stand outside my door all day; indeed, outside the little retaining wall of my orchard where it had been broken down in one place, so that the marks might not be effaced nor the sparsely-sprinkled gouts of blood tampered with.

But before I could welcome my good patron, one alighted from a shelty at the great Louping-on Stone by the school-house yett. It was the man for whom Silver Sand and I had been waiting for these four days. His pony was too wearied even to crop the grass, and stood with grey shaggy head hung down between its knees. He himself was so mired by the bogs, that, except for his wig, I could not have recognised my sometime guest the Chief McKitterick, commonly called the Red Killer.

"Why did you not tell me sooner?" he broke out savagely, "it seems I have come the day after the fair."

I hastened to introduce him to Sir Andrew as the owner of the House of the Dungeon, where Silver Sand had so often dwelt.

"I have heard of you, McKitterick," said Sir Andrew, drawing together his brows, "you sometimes assist the laws without saying 'by your leave' to me."

The Killer felt that he was somehow on his defence, and had his answer pat to his tongue tip.

"If it had been yourself, Sir Andrew, I should have come the readier, but I do not believe either one of us was eager to taste the tender mercies of David Graham, then Sheriff by decree royal."

"Well," said Sir Andrew, brusquely, "it is not an affair of red soldiers now, but of what has become of Silver Sand and the lad bairn. Have you the letter which John Faa wrote you? No, I shall not read it.

Do you pick out the passage which, in your opinion, it will be well for me to hear. I want none of your secrets, but, though presently without mandate, I am ready to do the business of the office in which I have had for long a faithful helper in Silver Sand."

I took the two upstairs to view the gable chamber which it had been my pride to prepare for Silver Sand's use. Sir Andrew found that nothing had been touched among the effects of the missing man. The clothes he had worn by day were neatly folded on the lid of the chest, and a great flat board weighted with books placed over to press them. For John Faa had learned a conspicuous neatness in France, among the monks of Issy. And though learning may be forgotten, and the formulæ of the schools relegated to the shades, habit remains strong; and Silver Sand continued to fold and press his clothes as though he had been still a junior Sulpician, with a pion standing, notebook in hand, ready to make a report if he failed or forgot.

One great riding cloak of blue Westphalian stuff was missing and it is certain that I had seen it about his shoulders when he came into the kitchen the night before. He had shaken off the big dew-drops which had fallen from the trees, and looked to a tag which he fancied to be loose.

On a nail projecting from the wall hung his small sword and pistols and the little gable window swung flapping upon its hinges. It was impossible, we all agreed, that he could have been seized in the room so near my own, however soundly I might have been sleeping, and carried downstairs without waking me. More, he had not been killed there, for the place was all in order, and in the same order as his clothes, not a chair displaced nor a book knocked from its shelf.

"I have it," said the Killer, cocking his wise little eye at Sir Andrew, "he has been called from below by someone he knew. He rose and answered from the gable

window, before running down with his cloak wrapped about his night gear, and a pair of old easy French slippers on his feet, as was his custom. See, there is a soft place under the drip of the eaves. I can make out the print of a shoe without a heel."

Sir Andrew caught the spirit of the hunt, and was as keen as the best, but the real discoveries were made by the little red-wigged ferret with the long oval head and short ears.

It was plain that until they had got Silver Sand clear of the orchard no harm had been done to him. But on the far side of the tree-stepped wooden stile began the first marks of blood. The top rail had been wrenched away and was found a dozen paces from the path, lying among the grass with six inches of one end broken off.

"He has defended himself well," said Chief McKitterick, "but what could an unarmed man do against three, one of whom at least used a knife, while probably another stunned him with a slung stone. How do I know? There are the footsteps of three booted men who have stood under the shadow of the big hawthorn at the stile —and here, mark you, he has fallen down. They have gathered him up and carried him off in the great blue military cloak!"

Sir Andrew stood grimly attentive and considered. He was naturally suspicious of the evidence of senses other than his own. But he was an old enough Justiciar to know that some men have a special gift for the unfolding of crime, needing only like a bloodhound to be put on the scent to run down the quarry.

When he looked again at the little man standing so quaintly on one leg, scratching his calf with the toe of the other foot, and quite unconsciously twisting his red wig between his fingers, he found in his heart a new respect for the Chief of the McKittericks of the Dungeon and Loch Dee.

* * * * *

The Red Killer had not spoken his whole mind to the Hereditary Sheriff. Such indeed was nowise his custom. His mind rebelled against the ordinary channels of human justice. He preferred instinctively to follow the trail and work out his own vengeance. He had lived a hard and desperate but by no means evil life even before the coming of John Faa. Then when the young man came, his heart had gone out to him with a free vivacity. He was now on fire, with something of the *beau tigre* about him, added to an almost fatherly feeling for Silver Sand whom he looked upon as a son.

In the search Mirren was the Killer's most able and intelligent assistant. She told him of the tall black man who had lounged and chewed grasses with his couple of followers on the grassy slopes above her father's cottage. The Killer found her exact in observation and unequalled in description.

"You should have been a laddie," he said in a transport of compliment.

But this was a sore subject with Mirren McNoah.

"That's what they are a' 'hintin' at," she complained, "I rin and hide—I risk my neck for the clergy, and my character for the like of you, and feint a body ever says that I'm a good lass. It's only 'whatna peety she is no a laddie'—or 'she wad hae worn the breeks weel, that yin.'"

"Never mind," said the Killer, smiling down at the small indignant face, "when you are married you shall wear them as sure as my name is McKitterick."

But the jest was lost upon Mirren, who went on to give him her experience of the hiding-places along the coast. These were numerous, but only two possessed the double entrance which alone rendered them a suitable shelter for such as might wish to escape by sea. These were the Gled's Nest and the Doocot Cave. Now the Doocot was ruled out of the reckoning because the iron hoops and forkings, though practicable by day, were out of the

question when it came to lowering a gagged, bound, and probably unconscious man in the darkness of a summer night.

The Gled's Nest then—and could Mirren show him the back entrance? Who indeed was better able than Mirren? But as the Lady Lilias was so distressed, might she not say a word to her? If they should find Silver Sand, she ought to be there.

"And why, pray?" the Killer asked the question to try her.

"That I am not at liberty to say, being but a lassie," said Mirren, "lassies do not tell on one another."

"I shall have some little matters to arrange with the gentleman whom I hope to find there," said the Killer, in his gentlest manner. "Then you can go to Lochnaw and tell Miss Lilias if you like. But do not be in too great a hurry coming back."

"Oh, I ken," said the girl clapping her hands, "you want to have him shaved and bonny before our wee leddy sees him. Think ye I ken naething, if they do caa' me half-a-laddie—half-a-lassie?"

"You are indeed a particularly well-informed young person. But you will remember not to come down 'Gash Gabbie' till ye hear me whistle three times."

Now "Gash Gibbie" was the narrow rock-cleft, not wide enough to be called a ravine, which cut into the cliffs from topping turf to tide-wash, and by which access to the upper cave as well as to the beach could be obtained.

Mirren promised, but she did not in the least see the reason for such niceness.

"I tell ye Lilias is as muckle to be trusted as me, though she be the Sheriff's niece, and the richt hand o' the Great Leddy."

"I make no doubt," said the Killer, "but I have my little fancies. I am getting old, you see, Mirren, and I must be humoured."

The girl nodded her head emphatically. "That's juist what my minnie says when my faither tears the fine lace falls off his sark-sleeves and stamps on them, caa'in' them ungodly vanities. She gathers them up, and sews them on her ain Sabbath goon, and he never says a word."

"Now I will take a look at 'Gash Gabbie' with your good leave and assistance," said the Killer to end the colloquy, which was always a matter of difficulty when talking with Mirren McNoah. "Where is the best hiding cover, and from what point can I observe the comings and goings of those in the cave?"

"And you so long aboot the countryside watching over Lochnaw Castle! Do ye not ken that from no point can ye see anything either of the Gled's Nest or the Doocot Cave till ye are at their doors?"

The Killer made himself very humble and teachable. He had, he said, been set to watch the great house, and over the welfare of the ladies within it: "A bonny-like thing it would have been," he added, "if Silver Sand had come and fand me out huntin' gulls' eggs on the rocks of the Black Head."

* * * * *

Having got rid of his guide, and with two clear hours before him in which to make his solitary search of the ravine called "Gash Gabbie," and of the Gled's Nest which opened into it about a third of the way down, the Killer first of all gave himself up to a leisurely and thorough examination of his weapons. After a moment of hesitation he decided to conceal his rapier in a tuft of heather. There would be no room for a display of his skill in fence. That, too, was a pity, for it was his strong point; and of all fights he hated a rough-and-tumble.

But with three against him he could look for nothing else. Knife and pistol must be trusted. The odds must be endured; and the Killer comforted himself with the reflection that he never fought his best when the parties were anyway equally matched. Still—three to one! He whistled softly—well, he had seen worse than that, but then he had had his discarded small sword, and room in which to use it. He whistled again, and made a little grimace.

Already the solans were beginning to cease their diving operations in the deep water off the rocks; and, after a wheel or two high in the pale blue-white sky, to measure their direction, they launched themselves across moor, loch and unstable sea-water, straight for their abode upon Ailsa.

A kind of tense silence fell upon "Gash Gabbie," as the Killer girt himself tighter with his broad belt of leather with the big silver buckle, and began a careful descent. He left coat and shoes to keep the rapier company; and now, in his shirt, knee-breeches and hose, he accounted himself like a vessel stripped to her fighting trim. Then the make of the man stood out—the perfect proportions, the sinewy arms, the feet which accommodated themselves to the rocky cleft as easily as to a high road—a man light and supple, with restless grey eyes, and a jaw which, in times of danger, advanced itself so that it almost hid his features.

Presently he picked up a fragment of blue cloak, torn cornerwise by a protruding bush of gorse. Here, too, were traces of blood where a hand had grasped the stem. A little way down a silver button glistened. The Killer picked it up and slipped it into his fob. Then he continued his descent with art and care, the sea fowl crying about him, and making dashes almost into his face, as he crawled downwards.

He was near the entrance of the cave now, and paused to give himself time to breathe before more serious action.

He heard a low, continuous moaning sound come to him, as it were, from the depths of the earth.

"Good God!" he murmured, "have they got a woman there?" But quickly he dismissed the idea. No, it was not the protest of humanity against the primal curse. If not that, what else?

And there flashed on his mind the word which alone is more terrible than murder—*torture.*

They were torturing some one in there, man or woman —but almost certainly man—the man he was seeking— John Faa, his lord and chief—upon whom his heart was set as a mother's on a favourite and unfortunate son.

The Red Killer flung himself flat on the rocky platform which led to the back entrance of the cavern. He wormed himself forward with a swift, keen action, like that of a snake. He poured his lithe body delicately about the obstacles, as if he had been a slowly moving fluid.

The moaning continued, hastening the advance of the Killer, and tightening every muscle of his body to be ready for the spring. He turned the corner, or rather his unwigged head did, for only his close-cropped poll emerging from the rocks could be seen. Two men were bending over a third, who was stretched bound upon the little apron of rock and turf in front of the cave. Their backs were towards him, and they were twisting a pair of sticks about which a cord was wrapped.

"Tell us where the money is, John Faa," said one, whose voice stung the Killer like the tooth of a serpent. "Tell us, and we promise you shall be put aboard a vessel bound for France."

"I know you will kill me," answered a voice which could hardly be known for the firm ringing tones of Silver Sand, so hoarse and low they sounded. "But it is no use to ask. The money of Egypt is far out of your reach, and of all such cowards and traitors!"

The Red Killer saw the sticks twist just once more, but

before the moaning had time to follow, he had launched himself upon them bent almost double. With one blow of his cropped poll, used like a battering-ram, he sent Doran headforemost over the cliff. It is hardly likely that he ever knew what struck him. His body struck the jutting rock fifty feet beneath the lower cave, turned a somersault and plunged heavily into the sea.

The Killer erected himself and looked at his remaining enemy with a smile of such hateful pleasure that the colour died out of the man's face. He even looked towards the cliff over which his companion had disappeared as if tempted to try a leap. If the way had been clear he would have risked it, but the noise Doran had made in his descent warned him of a certain fate.

"Grey Roger," said the Killer, as caressingly as if he had been a lover speaking to his lass in the twilight, "not this day and not yesterday did I begin to pray for our meeting each other alone—indeed ever since the day when you treacherously slew Lidgett Sylvester, I have thought of you night and morning. Stand back, there—to the rock! My pistol is upon you. I am first going to cut the bonds of this man whom you have tortured."

"It was nothing—we had but begun to threaten him a little—it was one of Doran's Donegal ideas!"

The words of Grey Roger stumbled one over the other, and his excuses would not frame themselves on his lips.

The blade of the Killer's knife flickered hither and thither. Silver Sand, released, sank back with a sigh, but there were drops of blood on his cheek and brow.

"This is your chief's blood," said the Killer, "and I swear to avenge it. Stand still, you hound! This pistol is very light on the trigger, but I mean to give you a fight for your life, before I send you Doran's way. I owe that to my chief and to the oath I swore over Lidgett Sylvester's grave."

"You are not going to murder me?" groaned Grey

Roger, whose ashen lips and colourless cheeks were now in perfect keeping with his name.

"My dear Roger," said the wary little man who stood between him and the ravine, "in your case I should not hesitate if you had as many lives as a cat. For, as you have doubtless heard, there are cases where 'killing is no murder.' Yours is precisely such an one. But, Roger, I shall not shoot you like a mad dog, as you deserve. Take up John Faa carefully and lay him in the hollow by the cave's mouth where he may be out of the way. Do not let your hand stray to your belt or sheath-knife. This pistol will be just behind your ear. You start—the muzzle tickles your neck. Most thoughtless of me! But do as I tell you and you are quite safe till we choose weapons and begin our little play."

"You will fight me for my life?"—Grey Roger looked up eagerly, "you have no men ready to kill me if I win?"

"Be calm, Roger," purred the Killer, "you will not win. I cannot quite give you the choice of weapons. No, I cannot go that length. For a pistol-ball is an uncertain thing, and in your hand the charge might go off too soon. But I have here two good Spanish knives, forged at Toledo. You shall have your choice, and what is more you shall have the shadier position with your back to the rock. There's for you Roger. Choose one and I shall take the other. Do not try to snatch both—that will not help you, I shall keep the pistol levelled till such time as you are ready."

They stood up watching each other eagerly, their heads a little forward and their bodies bent. But there was a great difference between them in defence. Grey Roger held his arm high with elbow flexed, the action of one who fights with a dagger. But the Killer advanced smilingly, his knife low, and the cutting edge turned upwards after the Spanish fashion. But both were dangerous with their weapons and at first, till he had proved

his man, the Killer took no liberties. He fenced almost too carefully, for in stopping a lightning down stroke from Grey Roger, who was much his superior in height and reach, the white sleeve of his shirt was slashed open, and a thin red line sprang along the back of the fore-arm from the wrist nearly to the elbow.

This success intoxicated the outlaw gipsy, and he sprang forward with fury, trying to force the Killer to the edge of the cliff. But, with the same little contemptuous smile playing about his mouth, McKitterick ducked his head and stepped easily aside. This alertness exasperated Grey Roger and after a while, when he had missed his stroke five times, he began to understand that he was being played with. He had been trapped, and was now fighting with a man infinitely his superior. He must die, but at least he should not die alone.

There, under the ledge by the mouth of the cavern called the Gled's Nest, lay the helpless body of Silver Sand. So at each bout he began to edge his way round in that direction, gaining sometimes a foot and sometimes two, but always getting nearer. A rapid wheel and one plunge of his blade would clear accounts with John Faa, and disappoint the Killer who had come to save him. His adversary, too, did not appear to notice that stealthy retreat. He pleased himself by dextrous parry, elaborate thrusts which did no more than scratch, and with keeping a watch on the mouth of "Gabbie's Gash," by which alone the man whom he had doomed had any chance of escape.

The time had come. Grey Roger was now within striking distance, and if his enemy were not fatigued, at least he was not pressing him very hard. A quick whirl, a lifted knife that gleamed over the prostrate body of Silver Sand, and all might have been over.

But even as he swerved a pistol cracked, and Grey Roger flung up his hands as the Killer drove the Toledo steel under his arm-pit.

"Traitor," he gasped, pointing to the mouth of "Gabbie's Gash," where the dark blue shadows of evening were gathering on the slaty rock, "I had your promise that you would fight me alone."

It was Lilias who stood there with pistol smoking in her hand, astonished and alarmed at what she had done. For Mirren, divining treachery, had picked up the Killer's discarded weapon and handed it to Lilias just in time.

"He would have killed him—I saw him turn to strike," said the girl, "and before I knew—the pistol went off."

"All the better," said the Killer, "the next moment would have sent him spinning Hell-ward at any rate. *He* talks of traitors who killed Lidgett Sylvester, an innocent boy who never did him any harm! I was a fool to give him a chance, and now it is to you, and not to me, that John Faa owes his life. Let us carry him to the spring and do you bathe his temples. So—it is an affair of yards. He will be himself before I can be with you."

Lilias and Mirren were safely out of sight in the depths of the Gled's Nest. The Red Killer was left alone with the double traitor. He bent over him, and as he looked an eyelid quivered and was lifted. The Killer's broad Toledo flickered in the pale evening light reflected up from the sea.

It fell once or twice, and before each stroke the voice of the executioner of justice said in the dying man's ear, "Lidgett Sylvester—think of Lidgett Sylvester!"

Then flinging the steel, stained as it was, over the edge, he rolled up the thing which had been Grey Roger, as one rolls a camp mattress, carried him to the edge of the cliff and with a sudden heave and a straightening of the strong lithe body the Killer lifted his dead enemy high above his head and tossed him into the suck of the out-going tide, now racing furiously oceanwards.

When Lilias came out to announce that Silver Sand

was himself again, the little balcony of rock and turf before the entrance of "Gash Gabbie" was as clean as a newly-swept parlour. And the Red Killer was smiling as at a pleasant memory.

XLII

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

IT was long before Silver Sand was able to come forth again into the pale clear September sunshine. Harvest was late in Galloway that year, and many fields still lay unreaped. But sitting in the rose garden of Lochnaw with Lilias by his side, all sights and sounds (except only those of her face and voice) appeared to the man whom Death had spoken and passed by as very strange, very distant and very unearthly. Other things were strange to him too. For instance, Lilias had spoken once or twice of the boy, but he only shook his head, not understanding what she meant.

She mentioned Juliana's name. He seemed to search as for something mislaid. Then he said, "Juliana—Juliana—it is a pretty name. I never knew a Juliana."

And Lilias secretly ashamed, but glad of her shame, did not again press him, nor was Juliana's name mentioned again between them for many months.

"And will Sir Andrew really give his consent to our marriage?" he asked more than once.

"He must—the good man has no choice," said Lilias. "I told him that if he did not we should simply do without."

"We shall be poor, Lilias—far poorer than I have been. For I cannot touch the money of Egypt. I have only my mother's money and a house that was hers on the hill called Danes' Bury in Essex."

"Very well—perhaps we shall live there, for James's horse-faced Eglinton would turn up her nose at us here. Or at least, I, Lilias Agnew, do not mean to give her the

chance. But what matters your money—I shall have all my own and all my Aunt Anne's. I shall sell Charteris to Sir Andrew, who for the estate's sake will jump at the chance. I have seen such cruel things here, Silver Sand, that I have no desire ever to look upon the place again. At least not for many years!"

Lilias rose and threw a shawl about his shoulders, for she was so afraid of his health that out of every zephyr she made a gale.

The Lady Jean said little, but deep down she had all the pride of the Hays of Park, which is saying no small word. However, one thing which Lilias said effectually silenced pride.

"Bless the woman," Lilias had cried gaily. "Does Aunt Jean think that she is the only woman in the world who can love a man? Can she not understand that Silver Sand is as necessary to me as Andrew Agnew is to her?"

This was a speech which had closed controversy between the two women, and now they sat together in amity and like good forehanded Scottish women sewed diligently at Lilias's trousseau. Sometimes they had the aid of Croose Nancy Saunders from the port, but mostly they sat and gossiped contentedly in the parlour—Lilias rising every few minutes to see that Silver Sand wanted for nothing as he lay stretched out among his books and papers. She had taken on a habit of anticipating his wishes already, and would get the books about him of which he had need.

Again, once or twice a day, having given her aunt sufficient time to show that she was not neglecting her, Lilias would slip in to Silver Sand and persuade him to come out and view the cornfields. Yonder was Sir Andrew labouring at dressing a cornstack as if he had never heard of a Justice Court, and James, come over from Innermessan, stripped to the shirt, or as his mother expressed it, "all in a pour of sweat and crying like a

ploughman to his beasts. But," she would add, "James has no real dignity. He is Agnew all over."

When the time came round for the half-yearly dues of the tribes of Egypt, Silver Sand sent messengers to all the heads of families to meet him in the school-house of Leswalt on a certain Sunday of October. I reproached him with the ungodly proceeding. But he said that if he did not see these men face to face much more and worse evils would happen. Sunday was their only day —he must make it his. He quoted the ears of corn which the Lord himself permitted to his disciples, and said that if I would not lend the school-house, he must go into the greenwood which would disquiet Lilias and cause him for ever to lose caste and character in the eyes of John McNoah, that extreme Cameronian Sabbatarian.

Of course he got his own way, and I had to entertain such a flock of dusky gipsies, all clad in their best, as perhaps never was seen in one house before or since.

First of all the Killer told the story of the capture and torturing of John Faa, and then amid plaudits, the death of the two caitiffs, the disappearance of the heir of Egypt and the flight of Hector Faa.

"I cannot accuse Hector Faa of more than plotting against his brother, but if he should return, claiming his brother's portion, you will know how to deal with him."

"Let us alone—we shall deal with Hector Faa," said the chiefs. And Silver Sand continued to speak feebly but clearly. He had been near to death. It would be months, perhaps years, before he was himself again. He could not in the meantime perform the duties of the Chief of Egypt. These he would be compelled to delegate —for the North to Chief McKitterick of the Dungeon, who would receive and account for all dues, and who should see justice done in the name of John Faa, as Jasper Stanley would likewise do for the South. Some day he would come back, when his wounds were healed and he was fitted to take his place at the head of his race.

As to the tithes of the Chieftainship, the great clan leaders refused with one mind to alienate them. They would obey. They would accept the delegate justices. The Killer and the Smith should be paid for their labours. But they also were of the blood and to obey was their business. The tithes were John Faa's and belonged (and could belong) to none other, and if he would not take them himself, they should be laid aside year by year for the heir who, without doubt, would one day reappear. They were not afraid or discouraged. They knew what they knew. It had been so before. Faas had disappeared in infancy and had come back girt with authority—there was Silver Sand himself for an example. He had been reared among the Romish Gorgios, yet who had ever made a better ruler of Egypt!

"Besides, you yourself shall come back," said Bailie, the head of the famous and wide-spread border clan. "So my wife read it yesterday, from the ink-pool seeing of my son's young son. Rejoicing yet sorrowing you shall return, and you shall die among your own people that they may escape. Soldiers shall hem them round, but you who are of the blood royal of Egypt, shall die an old man, but more gloriously than any of your fathers and of a death longer to be remembered."

Silver Sand bowed his head. He was exhausted with the effort he had made and summoned his last strength to find words with which to dismiss his people kindly.

"I am very feeble and have need of rest," he said. "Grey Roger and his comrades struck me hard. It will be long before I can return to do justice among you. Nevertheless my place shall be known, and if a quarrel rise which cannot be settled by those whom I leave in my place, I desire only a week's warning and I shall still judge according to the justice and the laws of Egypt. Now go and fare you well!"

* * * * *

The conference being ended, the men mounted their horses and rode away, scattering to the four winds of heaven. But their hearts were glad within them that John Faa should surely come back among them, and that his son should reign in his stead. So the seers had seen and so it should come to pass.

Silver Sand lay at ease in the couch bed which Sir Andrew had caused Robin Thomson of Port Patrick to make for his use. The lingering days of a glorious autumn drew to a close, and it was clear to all that if Silver Sand was to grow strong he must flee from the rude Atlantic blasts which would soon sweep the Back Shore of Wigtown. They spoke to him of Ireland, but he had no mind to be immured all winter within the grim fortress which Pat Agnew had made of Ballikill.

His heart was set on other things and other places. Visions haunted him of clear skies, of sæcular trees rising about village shrines, of an air equable and warm—and with all and through all the raillery of Lilias's speech, the smile of her glad eyes. His nights were filled with the odour and sweetness of flowers.

"Who has sprinkled rose-water in my room?" he would ask when he awoke.

"There is not a drop within a hundred miles," said Lilias, who had been watching him sleeping, perfectly divining his malady, but waiting for him to find out for himself. She resolved that he should not be "asked" twice in a lifetime.

It came about one day after he had wearied himself making up Sir Andrew's books, both of the estate and those of the Justice Courts of the shire. Indeed the stout and worthy knight gave himself very little trouble about such things if he could find any one else to harness to the drudgery.

Silver Sand was standing on the point of Nevin's Isle in the old place. She saw him from the window and came down with a shawl over her arm. He turned at the sound

of her footsteps, light though they were. Laborious James had cut the hay and the meadowsweet was no more.

Silver Sand turned upon her with a sudden strange wistfulness.

"I think I am sick for you, Lilias," he said, holding out both his hands with a swift passionate gesture. "Let us rise up and go!"

"Why, you have me beside you all day long, you long-legged Egyptian—what would you have more?"

"More—oh, much more," he cried fiercely. "All the corn is reaped and all the beasts in barn. There is no more work for us to do. Let us go home?"

"I am *at home*," said the girl. "I have never known any other."

"I will show you another, Lilias. We shall cross the seas. We shall tread love's ways where fireflies star the earth, and stars make golden the night air. Come to the south, Lilias, ah come, if you love me enough——"

She drew his head down upon her shoulder and comforted him.

"Great goose," she said cheerfully, "of course I will come. Why did you not ask me before?"

* * * * *

Mr. Walter Dunning sent home for the doctor's gown he had worn at *Sanctus Andreus,* his most ancient university. Sir Andrew would have had his tenantry hold high festival, but Silver Sand persuaded him that it was not the time to roast oxen whole or set bonfires flaring on heathy outlands. He wanted a change. He wanted other winds than those which even now bit into his marrow as he paced the fruitless orchard and the flowerless garden.

"Ye want your lass—can ye no say it and be dune!" quoth plain Sir Andrew, and in spite of Jean Hay's sense of propriety he hastened on the marriage. They had a

perfect day for it, a true Saint Martin's summer. To help them the east wind had turned south and blew gently from lands to which they hoped to go.

My Lady was gorgeous in a new dress, never worn before, and looked so well that Sir Andrew told her before every one that she ought to have been the bride!

From Innermessan came James. I walked up the avenue with him and methought he looked a little shamefaced. His wife could not come—she had a headache.

"Call it an indisposition, James," I counselled him, "for that is a good word in Galloway and may cover many things."

But bluff Sir Andrew, with whom he spoke apart, called out, "I will have none of that—I shall go and fetch her myself. The man who is good enough for me is good enough for any Montgomerie that ever breathed—aye, or Kennedy either——"

He added the last phrase quite irrelevantly, while James whispered assiduously in his ear.

"Oh," he said at length, persuaded against his will, "if it be as you say some woman's trouble—the green and not the yellow sickness—there's no more to be said. But take the news at once to Jean Hay. She will not be over well pleased to see you here by yoursel' on siccan a day."

So they were married, and I, Nathan Crogo, signed the register, and so did a little man very grave and grey (something like a retired lawyer one skilled in conveyancing) and the clearly written name of Timothy McKitterick covered no less formidable a personality than the renowned Red Killer. Mirren upheld the bride's train and felt that she would not be so excited when she stood up before the minister on her own account. In fact she had known that it would come to this, a good while before either of the principals faced the facts.

After the little writerlike man had ridden away Silver Sand found in his travelling bags a heavy pouch of gold

upon which was written, "The Faa's part," and within at the bottom was Sir William Forbes's written order upon his bank in Edinburgh High Street, for a thousand pounds of sterling money on the great Roman banker the Prince Polonia.

In the purse along with Sir William Forbes's order was the following letter from Darya Servian of Budapest, the Chief of all the Hungarian gipsies, the only man whom in influence, if not in blood, could be compared to John Faa himself. He was rich and powerful from the Fairground of Nizni Novgorod to the gates of the Bosphorus, but he wrote to the Red Killer as comrade to comrade.

He began with compliments after the eastern fashion, but came soon, like a man of business habits, to the matter in hand.

"To Chief McKitterick, called the Killer, greeting and honour between us two who have drunk each other's blood. I received your letter concerning the babe John Stanley Faa, Son of John of the blood royal. I made search and found Hector Faa in Cracow. The Scottish woman and the child were with him. I took the child and set him with honour among my own youngelings in the women's quarters. He shall be brought up as my own sons. Also I took sharp order with Hector Faa, so that he shall no more trouble you, nor concern himself with his brother's heir. I am in my own land and do my own justice. Salute John Faa. When he is recovered he shall one day do me an equal service. I am glad that you cleared his blood feuds so swiftly. In these I do not think Hector Faa had any part. The man is a good soldier. He would kill but not torture.

"Come our way when you are weary of your hills and see the son of John Faa growing up like a young colt and meantime do not forget your ancient friend and brother of the Red Cap,

"Darya Servian."

Then both Lilias and Silver Sand were comforted, for in their hearts they were ashamed to acknowledge how little they had thought of the son of Juliana.

* * * * *

They crossed the Bay of Storms with a clean, clear breeze, and never shortened sail till they were at Leghorn, from which in a short day's journey they came to Pisa.

Though it was now late November they walked out in a glow as of a Scottish June among the flowers of the Campo Santo. Lilias watched Silver Sand with growing happiness. Not once during the voyage had he put up his hand to his head in the pitiful way which had been habitual to him during the months in Galloway, when he had often made her heart ache.

Hers was a gladness so calm and serene that she did not dare speak of it lest she should again tempt the jealous gods.

"Lilias," said her husband, taking her hand as they sat in the sun on an ancient tomb, "why did you hurry me down into the cabin that day when the west wind blew us eastward out of our course?"

"Because," said Lilias smiling, "I was afraid you might turn back even then. That press of sail we saw scudding before us was the topsails of the Prince of Orange's fleet entering Torbay."

Silver Sand drew her closer, because the place was lonely.

"Dear," he said, "I would not have left you then, for all the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them!"

"And now?"

"Now," said Silver Sand, "I wake each morning to a new Lilias and a new day. Old things are blank and faded, like stories they told me to hush me to sleep. You have cured me, as I knew you would when you promised to come away with me."

"Nonsense, Silver Sand," said Lilias, rising up to

prevent further sentiment, "how much money have you? I saw a jewel of a villa to-day, with deep piazzas which look towards the mountains of Carrara. From there we could see the white oxen dragging their wooden-axled car, laden with marble slabs. Yet we would not be near enough to the road to hear the creaking of the ungreased wheels."

"I have enough for you and me and the villa, too, Lilias, unless the owner proves altogether a brigand."

"Well, then we can take possession to-morrow. The place is furnished and the servants are engaged."

"It seems to me," quoth Silver Sand, "that you were a little late in asking me as to my money."

"Not a whit," retorted Lilias cheerfully, "not nearly so belated as you are in asking about my dowry. If you took no better care of Sir Andrew's finances than you do of your own, I am sorry for him. You treat me as if I came to you as poor as a tinker's wife."

"That is just what you are, my poor Lilias, a poor tinker's wife!" Silver Sand spoke gravely.

Lilias threw herself upon his shoulder in a burst of contrition.

"Oh, I am sorry, Silver Sand—I did not mean to say that. How bad and foolish of me! You are the wisest and the best——"

"Of tinkers—well, perhaps!" said Silver Sand, "at any rate I am a great deal the happiest!"

"And I," she whispered, "I am—oh, such a proud little tinker's wife!"

As Lilias spoke the mellow glow of candles began to light up the cathedral windows with green, lilac, and glorious blue, deep as the heart of a sapphire. A scarlet-robed cardinal passed by borne in a sedan chair, and over their heads the bells of the leaning tower rang out sudden and sweet.

Silver Sand and Lilias loosed their hands, kissed one another in the gloom, and went in thankfully to evensong.

The End.

And yet not the end! For much remains to tell—of my dear son Silver Sand and his wife Lilias first of all. But afterwards more completely of the return of that most adventurous young pink of chivalry, the lost heir of the Faas. Thanks be to the Giver of all good that He spared me to see these later things, and hath so preserved my life and intellects that He will (life and time being granted) enable me to rememorate them more fully and in another place.

If it were not for the good hope of this task yet before me, I declare I should feel life ended for me indeed. I am so old and have seen so much, that sometimes out of a full heart, I stay the writing of my copy-lines, push my Latin books aside, and lay my old head down on the ink-stained, knife-scarred bench where, if I weep, nobody is the wiser or the worse, except the hens in the baulks overhead, who crane their necks regardant, but say never a word.

Then, when I lift my head, my eyes fall upon my favourite text of Scripture, which I have had printed in large letters, so that it may sink into the hearts of all, as it has into mine, after knowing Silver Sand and my dear patron, Sir Andrew,

"Deal courageously, and the Lord shall be with the good."

Printed in the United States of America.

FICTION

CAROLINE ABBOT STANLEY *Author of "The Master of the Oaks"*

The Keeper of the Vineyard

A Tale of the Ozarks. Illustrated, $1.25 net.

This story of a "return to nature," like the author's "Master of the Oaks," pulsates with real life. The scene lies in the Missouri Ozarks, a melting pot wherein those who seek the solace of nature and a living from the soil fuse their lives with the natives of the Hills in the common quest for liberty and education, love and life.

NORMAN HINSDALE PITMAN

The Lady Elect

A Chinese Romance. Illustrated by Chinese artists. 12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

Some of the best judges of a good story as well as some of the highest authorities on "Things Chinese" pronounce this story a remarkable combination of the rarest and most irresistible type of pure romance and the truest and most realistic delineation of Chinese life. The novelty of the setting and the situations will win the instant approval of the lover of good fiction.

RICHARD S. HOLMES

Bradford Horton: Man

A Novel. 12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

Dr. Holmes made a distinct place for himself among lovers of good fiction with his earlier stories, "The Victor," and "The Maid of Honor." Competent critics pronounce this new story the author's best. The hero is a man's man who wins instant admiration. Originality of humor, reality of pathos, comedy and heart tragedy are woven into the story.

MARIETTA HOLLEY (*Josiah Allen's Wife*)

Samantha on the Woman Question

Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

For an entire generation Marietta Holley has been entertraining lovers of good humor. "My Opinion and Betsy Bobbitts" and "Samantha at the Centennial" made her name a household word. This last volume is not only timely but with all its facetiousness, keen and telling in its advocacy of "Votes for Women" and Temperance. It equals anything the author has produced.

CHARLES H. LERRIGO

Doc Williams

A Tale of the Middle West. Illustrated, net $1.25.

"The homely humor of the old doctor and his childlike faith in 'the cure' is so intensely human that he captures the sympathy of the layman at once—a sympathy that becomes the deepest sort of interest."—*Topeka Capital.*

FICTION WITH A PURPOSE

RUPERT HUGHES

Miss 318 and Mr. 37

Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, net 75c.

Miss 318 has met her affinity. In this latest story of how she captured him in the person of a New York fire laddie, "Number 37," Mr. Hughes has surpassed himself. The narrative is full of the same characters, humor, department store lingo and vital human interest of MISS 318.

MARY ELIZABETH SMITH

In Bethany House

A Story of Social Service. 12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

"Without any plot at all the book would still be worth reading; with its earnestness, its seriousness of purpose, its health optimism, its breadth of outlook, and its sympathetic insight into the depths of the human heart."—*N. Y. Times*

MARGARET E. SANGSTER

Eastover Parish

Cloth, net $1.00.

A new story by Margaret Sangster is an "event" among a wide circle of readers. Mary E. Wilkins places Mrs. Sangster as "a legitimate successor to Louise M. Alcott as a writer of meritorius books for girls, combining absorbing story and high moral tone." Her new book is a story of "real life and real people, of incidents that have actually happened in Mrs. Sangster's life."

THOMAS D. WHITTLES

The Parish of the Pines

The Story of Frank Higgins, the Lumber-Jack's Sky Pilot. Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

Norman Duncan, author of "The Measure of a Man," calls this "Walking boss of the Sky-route Company," "a man's Christian doing an admirable work in the Woods of the Northwest." The narrative has the ozone, and the spiciness of the great pine forests in which the scenes are laid.

ANNE GILBERT

The Owl's Nest

Cloth, net 75c.

"This is the account of a vacation among 'isms.' Followers of some of the fantastic cults and simple Christians met together in a country boarding house and the result is certainly interesting."—*Missions.*

ISABEL G. and FLORENCE L. BUSH

Goose Creek Folks

A Story of the Kentucky Mountains

Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

A story of real life among the mountaineers of Kentucky. It is a word picture of aspiration, sacrifice and honor. Humor and pathos mingle with purpose and adventure in a vivid tale of "things as they are" in this primitive Southern community.

FICTION OF WORTH

NORMAN DUNCAN

The Best of a Bad Job

A Hearty Tale of the Sea. Illus., net $1.00

Norman Duncan is as much at home along the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland as Kipling is in India or Dickens was in London. In this, his latest tale of "Down North," he combines that charming realism and heart stirring sentiment in a style which is the despair of the reviewer and the delight of the reader.

CAROLINE ABBOT STANLEY

The Master of "The Oaks"

Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

Of Mrs. Stanley's literary work *The San Francisco Chronicle* said: "If it be high art to move the reader deeply, to grip the heart strings by a story that is without stage mannerisms and which deals with only real people and legitimate situations, then Caroline Abbot Stanley should reach a high place among story-tellers of to-day."

CLARA E. LAUGHLIN

The Penny Philanthropist

With Frontispiece, 12mo. cloth, net $1.00.

This story of "Peggy", the proprietor of the Halsted Street, News "Imporium" will quicken the beat of sympathetic hearts. "Others" was her motto, and those who read the sparkling record of her penny-a-day philanthropy will thereafter irresistibly think more of others. The Penny Philanthropist, like the widow with her mite, will enshrine herself in the hearts of those who love the unobtrusive deeds of simple kindliness.

JAMES M. LUDLOW

Avanti! Garibaldi's Battle Cry

A Tale of the Resurrection of Sicily—1860. 12mo, cloth, net $1.25.

The author of "The Captain of the Janizaries," "Deborah," "Sir Raoul," etc., adds another historical tale to the list of his earlier successes. Sicily, the picturesque in the time of Garibaldi, is the scene of this stirring romance. A delightful love story runs throughout; but there are other passions than those of the tenderer sort,—those that come out in politcal intrigue, in splendid patriotism, and in battle rage.

WINIFRED ARNOLD

Mis' Bassett's Matrimony Bureau

Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

Si, Ezry and Zekle, Cynthy, Elviny and Mirandy with many another character whose name suggests the humorous and homely phraseology of "way down East" disport themselves to the "everlastin" delight of the reader. "How could she do it," "where did she get it all" have been the expressions of advance readers.

WILFRED T. GRENFELL, M.D.

Down North on The Labrador

Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, net $1.00.

A new collection of Labrador yarns by the man who has succeeded in making isolated Labrador a part of the known world. Like its predecessor the new volume, while confined exclusively to facts in Dr. Grenfell's daily life, is full of romance, adventure and excitement. The *N. Y. Sun* recently said: "Admirable as is the work that Dr. Grenfell is doing on the Labrador coast, the books he has written, make his readers almost wish he would give up some of it to write more."

CLARA E. LAUGHLIN

The Gleaners

A Novellette. Illustrated, decorated boards, net 75c.

Again Miss Laughlin has given us a master-piece in this story of present day life. Millet's picture, "The Gleaners," is the moving spirit of this little romance and, incidentally, one catches the inspiration the artist portrays in his immortal canvas. "The Gleaners" is issued in similar style to "Everybody 's Lonesome," of which the *Toronto Globe* said: "One of the successful writers of 'Good Cheer' stories for old and young is Miss Laughlin, and whoever reads one of her cheery little volumes desires more."

PROF. EDWARD A. STEINER *Author of "The Immigrant Tide," etc.*

The Broken Wall

Stories of the Mingling Folk. Illustrated, net $1.00.

Professor Steiner has the story-teller's knack and uses his art with consummate skill in this collection, where will be found dramatic tragedy and profound pathos in strong contrast with keen humor and brilliant wit, all permeated by an uncompromising optimism. No man has probed the heart of the immigrant more deeply, and his interpretation of these Americans of tomorrow is at once a revelation and an inspiration; a liberal education in brotherhood.

A. D. STEWART

Heather and Peat

12mo, cloth, net $1.20.

"This is a very delightful story, told in the broadest and most fascinating Scotch language. The author belongs of right to that class of modern Scotch writers who bring out matters of vital human interest, with religious and tender touches, and this story is one that any writer might be proud of and any reader of feeling and vitality must delight in."—*Journal and Messenger.*